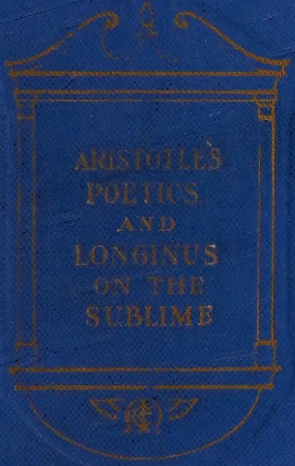
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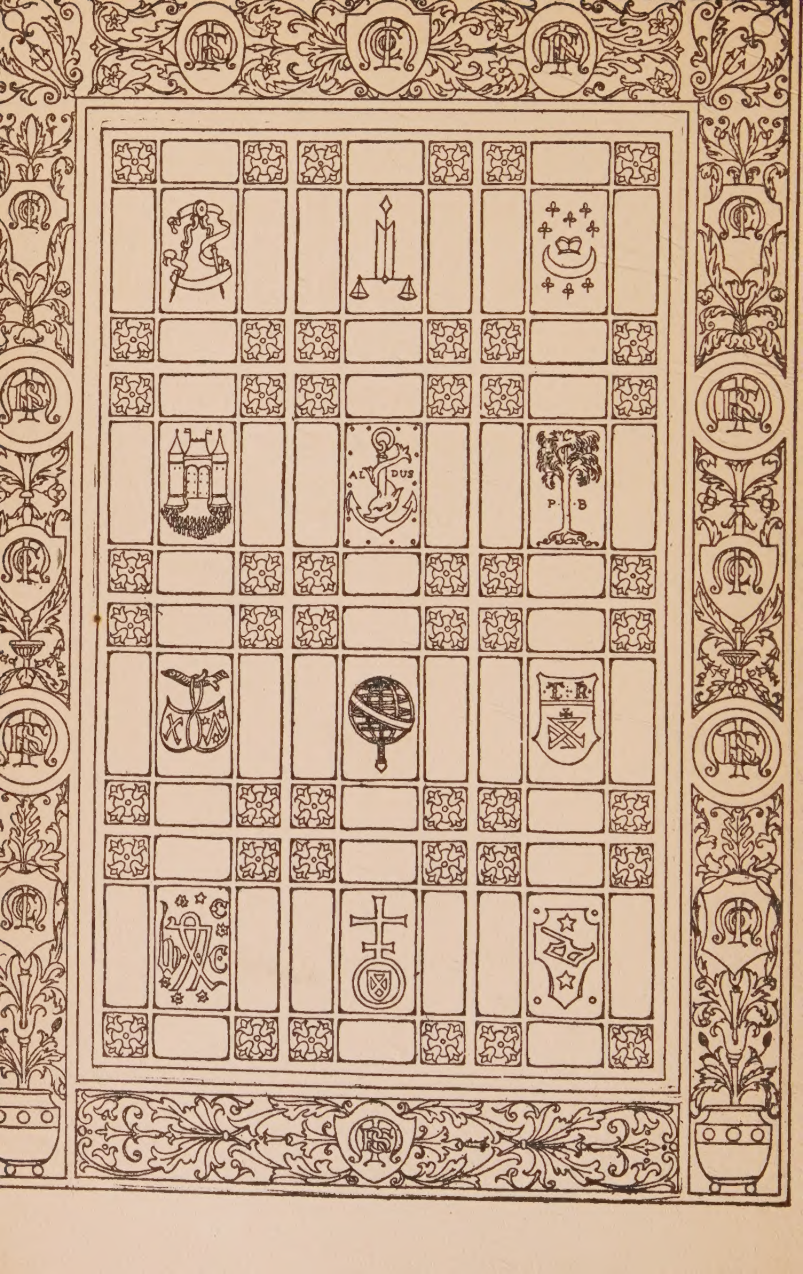
Aristotle's Poetics
Longinus on the Sublime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Aristotle's Poetics
Longinus on the Sublime

EDITED WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY

CHARLES SEARS BALDWIN

PROFESSOR OF RHETORIC AND ENGLISH COMPOSITION IN COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

Translation of the Poetics *by* Ingram Bywater *and of* Longinus on the Sublime *by* W. Rhys Roberts

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INTRODUCTION

THE immortal writings that we call classic are works of creative imagination, not works of criticism. But occasionally criticism has been so creative, so revealing to both readers and writers, as to win an equal permanence. Lessing's "Laokoön" is even more suggestive to the twentieth century than it was to the eighteenth. Among the abundant essays of the intervening years few show such vision. It has been no less rare throughout literary history.

Two Greek criticisms, both brief, both incomplete, both lost to the western world of letters for centuries, have that compelling character which made them eloquent to the Renaissance that recovered them, and which has stirred all modern nations: the "Poetics" of Aristotle and the treatise usually entitled in English "Longinus on the Sublime." One comes from the years following the great period of Greek drama; the other, from some period—the author and even the century are undetermined—of the Roman Empire. Both are so fundamental that they have survived even imperfect translation and still provoke lively discussion. Though at first glance they seem to have nothing in common except that they both deal with writing, they are found to be happily complementary. For the one is preoccupied

with composition, the other with style. Together they open the whole field of literary criticism.

I

Aristotle's "Poetics" analyzes dramas and verse narratives for the ways in which they are organized, their art of composition. This art, like others, is an imitation of human life; but its ways of imitation are less like those of painting and sculpture than like those of dance and music. Aristotle thus ranges poetic not with the space arts, but with the time arts, because its imitation is by movement. By its characteristic movement, in turn, he distinguishes drama from narrative. The one is mainly representation; the other, mainly suggestion. Drama comes before a crowd in flesh and blood; narrative casts its spell upon listeners, even upon solitary readers, by words alone. The one reveals human life in crises; the other leads us through it.

Far the most space in the "Poetics" is given to tragedy. The corresponding section on comedy, if ever written, is lost. Besides being in Aristotle's time much the higher dramatic art, tragedy doubtless seemed to him permanently, not merely on the stage of his time, more significant as an art of composition. He defines its imitation of human action as: (1) serious, that is humanly significant; (2) critical, so intensified in a crisis as to have full and steady course within the brief time of presentation; (3) enhanced emotionally by the suggestions of rhythmical language; (4) but progressing by action, not by

story; (5) and leading us to emotional satisfaction at the end. The last is his famous doctrine of the tragic catharsis. Tragedy "through pity and fear achieves the purgation of such emotions." It is concluded not only in action, but in emotion. It is convincing to our hearts.

Thus to satisfy us by a final release, tragedy must move steadily, inevitably. Its art Aristotle finds to be essentially an art of plot, that is of planning the action as a sequence. The beginning is so chosen and shaped that the spectators will enter the situation readily and sympathetically; the middle is not merely a series of scenes, but a course, a progress of motives working out in significant actions; the end is the inevitable issue. The catharsis, far from being sudden or spectacular, is reached by the consistency of the whole play. Consistency is also the clue to dramatic characterization. A character is convincing, that is he becomes real and significant, by motivation, by working out his dramatic destiny.

In technical detail playwriting depends fundamentally on a habit of visualizing people in action. Taking shape first in scenario, which is the plotting of a sequence manageable on the stage, it is worked out typically as complication and solution. Subsidiary to these essentials of composition are considerations of the speeches, whether as ideas or as style.

Epic, though it has the general resemblance of interpreting human life instead of merely chronicling, Aristotle differentiates from tragedy in both com-

position and style. In the former its characteristic advantages are scope and variety; it gives the pleasure of ranging. In the latter its habitual rhythms are the result of experience in what is narratively suggestive. Not only does Aristotle give epic less space; he even goes so far as to call it inferior to tragedy. Rejecting the contention that narrative is less exaggerated, that is, more normal, he finds it poorer in resources. It has fewer means of appeal. Hence it is less vivid. It is also less intense; for it lacks dramatic unity.

This ranking of epic is important less for itself than for its iteration of Aristotle's conception of tragedy—intensity through unity. The object of dramatic unity is thus still better seen to be not bareness, not austerity, but the fullness of intensity and the force of continuity. It is to give time for intense realization of what actual life merely hints interruptedly. It is to give us human life in uninterrupted course, that our sight may be led to insight. Drama, often prevailing without this Greek compactness, has nevertheless reverted to it again and again when the prime object, as with the Greek tragedians, was intensity.

Aristotle's saying, "Poetry is something more philosophical and more serious than history," is summed up in the phrase *poetic justice*. It means the truth revealed beneath the facts, the real cause and effect moving beneath the surface. An audience, desiring deeper emotional experience than it achieves through daily observation, desires especially to see

how its sharper conflicts issue. The convincing close, expressing the playwright's intention and resulting from the whole course of action, measures how far a play is in Aristotle's sense serious, how far it is penetrative and significant, in a word how far it is tragic. Each disclosure, each critical scene of the dramatic progress, having its full emotional value separately and for itself, leads on to the next. Such planning for momentum Aristotle reveals as essentially and therefore permanently dramatic.

The reading of criticism so penetrative should be more than an excursion into archaeology. It should enter into Aristotle's intention to consider what makes drama, our own as well as his, and what vitally moves it to possess an audience.

II

The treatise "On the Sublime," in method no less than in subject, is as different as possible. Its force is not in consecutive exposition, but in penetrating suggestion. Less reasoned than Aristotle's, it is more eloquent. Indeed, its distinctive quality is a noble and contagious enthusiasm. There is no more persuasive summons to say high things highly.

"The Sublime" renders too narrowly the Greek title, which means *height* more generally. The author includes Sappho as well as Sophocles. His measure applied to English would include "quietly rested under the drums and tramplings of three conquests," and "I could not love thee, dear, so much, loved I not honor more," and "Four-score and seven years

ago our fathers." It is not limited to the heights of Shakspere and Milton. So his title may be translated better, though somewhat too broadly, *Style;* for it is meant to cover all emotional heightening of diction.

Such emotional use of words he sees as common ground to both rhetoric, the art of persuading men in the conduct of their lives, and poetic, the art of enhancing their vision of life. Keeping quite clear the distinction between these two arts in composition, he shows that in diction rhetoric must for its higher effects learn from poetic. All the higher reaches of style, in oratory as well as in drama, narrative, or lyric, in prose as well as in verse, he shows to be imaginative.

For imagery is the verbal means of giving effect to intellectual power of conception and emotional power of suggestion. Add to imagery, he urges, a consistent purpose rather to speak nobly than to maintain even excellence, and study the expression of mood in sentence rhythm. Though none of these counsels offers anything new in theory, they appeal freshly by being themselves not only precepts, but examples. "The fire of Demosthenes is like lightning; of Cicero, like a conflagration." "A figure seems best when it is not noticed as a figure." "What is hurried and roughened by emotion, if you smooth it out to a level by conjunctions, loses its spur and fire." "Beautiful words are essentially the very light of thought."

A more pervasive appeal is felt again and again in passages of wider reach, the appeal of moral earnest-

ness, the glow of an artist who is a teacher because he is a missionary.

What, then, did those immortals see who reached at the greatest things in writing and scorned unvarying nicety? Besides many other things, this, that nature meant us men to be no low species nor ignoble; but leading us, as into a great pageant, into life and the whole order of things, to be spectators of all that she shows and contestants eager for honor, she implanted forthwith in our souls invincible passion for all that is permanently great and in our eyes more divine.

Where has been more persuasively expressed the final authority of literature? Great authors satisfy our longing to enter the human scene fully, to experience vicariously and to share in imagination passions and deeds greater than those of our every day. They touch the heights of style who know the heights of life.

CHARLES SEARS BALDWIN.

NOTE ON THE TEXT

This reprint of Ingram Bywater's translation of Aristotle's "Poetics" omits a few pages whose significance depends upon knowledge of Greek. Each omission has been indicated. One such omission and a very few others of single technical terms have been made in reprinting the second edition of W. Rhys Roberts' translation of the treatise "On the Sublime." Only those few foot-notes have been retained which are necessary to clearness. Punctuation and capitals have been made uniform throughout.

POETICS

Poetics

I. Our subject being poetry, I propose to speak not only of the art in general, but also of its species and their respective capacities, of the structure of plot required for a good poem, of the number and nature of the constituent parts of a poem, and likewise of any other matters in the same line of inquiry. Let us follow the natural order and begin with the primary facts.

Epic poetry and tragedy, as also comedy, dithyrambic poetry, and most flute-playing and lyre-playing, are all, viewed as a whole, modes of imitation. But at the same time they differ from one another in three ways, either by a difference of kind in their means, or by differences in the objects, or in the manner of their imitations.

Just as form and colour are used as means by some, who (whether by art or constant practice) imitate and portray many things by their aid, and the voice is used by others, so also in the above-mentioned group of arts, the means with them as a whole are rhythm, language, and harmony—used, however, either singly or in certain combinations. A combination of rhythm and harmony alone is the means in flute-playing and lyre-playing, and any other arts there may be of the same description, e.g.

imitative piping. Rhythm alone, without harmony, is the means in the dancer's imitations; for even he, by the rhythms of his attitudes, may represent men's characters, as well as what they do and suffer. There is further an art which imitates by language alone, without harmony, in prose or in verse, and if in verse, either in some one or in a plurality of metres. This form of imitation is to this day without a name. We have no common name for a mime of Sophron or Xenarchus and a Socratic conversation; and we should still be without one even if the imitation in the two instances were in trimeters or elegiacs or some other kind of verse—though it is the way with people to tack on 'poet' to the name of a metre, and talk of elegiac-poets and epic-poets, thinking that they call them poets not by reason of the imitative nature of their work, but indiscriminately by reason of the metre they write in. Even if a theory of medicine or physical philosophy be put forth in a metrical form, it is usual to describe the writer in this way. Homer and Empedocles, however, have really nothing in common apart from their metre; so that, if the one is to be called a poet, the other should be termed a physicist rather than a poet. We should be in the same position also, if the imitation in these instances were in all the metres, like the *Centaur* (a rhapsody in a medley of all metres) of Chaeremon; and Chaeremon one has to recognize as a poet. So much, then, as to these arts. There are lastly certain other arts which combine all the means enumerated, rhythm, melody, and

verse, e.g. dithyrambic and nomic poetry, tragedy and comedy; with this difference, however, that the three kinds of means are in some of them all employed together, and in others brought in separately, one after the other. These elements of difference in the above arts I term the means of their imitation.

II. The objects the imitator represents are actions, with agents who are necessarily either good men or bad—the diversities of human character being nearly always derivative from this primary distinction, since the line between virtue and vice is one dividing the whole of mankind. It follows, therefore, that the agents represented must be either above our own level of goodness, or beneath it, or just such as we are; in the same way as, with the painters, the personages of Polygnotus are better than we are, those of Pauson worse, and those of Dionysius just like ourselves. It is clear that each of the above-mentioned arts will admit of these differences, and that it will become a separate art by representing objects with this point of difference. Even in dancing, flute-playing, and lyre-playing such diversities are possible; and they are also possible in the nameless art that uses language, prose or verse without harmony, as it means. Homer's personages, for instance, are better than we are; Cleophon's are on our own level; and those of Hegemon of Thasos, the first writer of parodies, and Nicochares, the author of the *Diliad*, are beneath it. The same is true of the dithyramb and the nome; the personages may be presented in them with the difference exemplified in the . . .

of . . . and Argas, and in the Cyclopses of Timotheus and Philoxenus. This difference it is that distinguishes tragedy and comedy also; the one would make its personages worse, and the other better, than the men of the present day.

III. A third difference in these arts is in the manner in which each kind of object is represented. Given both the same means and the same kind of object for imitation, one may either (1) speak at one moment in narrative and at another in an assumed character, as Homer does; or (2) one may remain the same throughout, without any such change; or (3) the imitators may represent the whole story dramatically, as though they were actually doing the things described.

As we said at the beginning, therefore, the differences in the imitation of these arts come under three heads: their means, their objects, and their manner. So that as an imitator Sophocles will be on one side akin to Homer, both portraying good men; and on another to Aristophanes, since both present their personages as acting and doing. This in fact, according to some, is the reason for plays being termed dramas, because in a play the personages act the story. Hence too both tragedy and comedy are claimed by the Dorians as their discoveries; comedy by the Megarians, by those in Greece as having arisen when Megara became a democracy, and by the Sicilian Megarians on the ground that the poet Epicharmus was of their country, and a good deal earlier than Chionides and Magnes. Even tragedy

also is claimed by certain of the Peloponnesian Dorians. In support of this claim they point to the words 'comedy' and 'drama.' . . . So much, then, as to the number and nature of the points of difference in the imitation of these arts.

IV. It is clear that the general origin of poetry was due to two causes, each of them part of human nature. Imitation is natural to man from childhood, one of his advantages over the lower animals being this, that he is the most imitative creature in the world, and learns at first by imitation. And it is also natural for all to delight in works of imitation. The truth of this second point is shown by experience. Though the objects themselves may be painful to see, we delight to view the most realistic representations of them in art, the forms for example of the lowest animals and of dead bodies. The explanation is to be found in a further fact. To be learning something is the greatest of pleasures not only to the philosopher, but also to the rest of mankind, however small their capacity for it. The reason of the delight in seeing the picture is that one is at the same time learning, gathering the meaning of things, e.g. that the man there is so-and-so; for if one has not seen the thing before, one's pleasure will not be in the picture as an imitation of it, but will be due to the execution or colouring or some similar cause. Imitation, then, being natural to us—as also the sense of harmony and rhythm, the metres being obviously species of rhythms—it was through their original aptitude, and by a series of improvements for the

most part gradual on their first efforts, that they created poetry out of their improvisations.

Poetry, however, soon broke up into two kinds according to the differences of character in the individual poets; for the graver among them would represent noble actions, and those of noble personages, and the meaner sort the actions of the ignoble. The latter class produced invectives at first, just as others did hymns and panegyrics. We know of no such poem by any of the pre-Homeric poets, though there were probably many such writers among them. Instances, however, may be found from Homer downwards, e.g. his *Margites*, and the similar poems of others. In this poetry of invective its natural fitness brought an iambic metre into use; hence our present term 'iambic,' because it was the metre of their 'iambs' or invectives against one another. The result was that the old poets became some of them writers of heroic and others of iambic verse. Homer's position, however, is peculiar. Just as he was in the serious style the poet of poets, standing alone not only through the literary excellence, but also through the dramatic character of his imitations, so too he was the first to outline for us the general forms of comedy by producing not a dramatic invective, but a dramatic picture of the ridiculous. His *Margites* in fact stands in the same relation to our comedies as the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* to our tragedies. As soon, however, as tragedy and comedy appeared in the field, those naturally drawn to the one line of poetry became writers of comedies instead of iambs, and

those naturally drawn to the other, writers of tragedies instead of epics, because these new modes of art were grander and of more esteem than the old.

If it be asked whether tragedy is now all that it need be in its formative elements, to consider that, and decide it theoretically and in relation to the theatres, is a matter for another inquiry. It certainly began in improvisations, as did also comedy; the one originating with the authors of the dithyramb, the other with those of the phallic songs, which still survive as institutions in many of our cities. And its advance after that was little by little, through their improving on whatever they had before them at each stage. It was in fact only after a long series of changes that the movement of tragedy stopped on its attaining to its natural form. (1) The number of actors was first increased to two by Aeschylus, who curtailed the business of the chorus, and made the dialogue, or spoken portion, take the leading part in the play. (2) A third actor and scenery were due to Sophocles. (3) Tragedy acquired also its magnitude. Discarding short stories and a ludicrous diction, through its passing out of its satyric stage, it assumed, though only at a late point in its progress, a tone of dignity; and its metre changed then from trochaic to iambic. The reason for their original use of the trochaic tetrameter was that their poetry was satyric and more connected with dancing than it now is. As soon, however, as a spoken part came in, nature herself found the appropriate metre. The iambic, we know, is the most speakable of metres, as is

shown by the fact that we very often fall into it in conversation, whereas we rarely talk hexameters, and only when we depart from the speaking tone of voice. (4) Another change was a plurality of episodes or acts. As for the remaining matters, the superadded embellishments and the account of their introduction, these must be taken as said, as it would probably be a long piece of work to go through the details.

V. As for comedy, it is (as has been observed) an imitation of men worse than the average—worse, however, not as regards any and every sort of fault, but only as regards one particular kind, the ridiculous, which is a species of the ugly. The ridiculous may be defined as a mistake or deformity not productive of pain or harm to others. The mask, for instance, that excites laughter, is something ugly and distorted without causing pain.

Though the successive changes in tragedy and their authors are not unknown, we cannot say the same of comedy. Its early stages passed unnoticed, because it was not as yet taken up in a serious way. It was only at a late point in its progress that a chorus of comedians was officially granted by the archon; they used to be mere volunteers. It had also already certain definite forms at the time when the record of those termed comic poets begins. Who it was who supplied it with masks, or prologues, or a plurality of actors and the like, has remained unknown. The invented fable, or plot, however, originated in Sicily with Epicharmus and Phormis. Of Athenian poets Crates was the first to drop the

comedy of invective and frame stories of a general and non-personal nature, in other words, fables or plots.

Epic poetry, then, has been seen to agree with tragedy to this extent, that of being an imitation of serious subjects in a grand kind of verse. It differs from it, however, (1) in that it is in one kind of verse and in narrative form; and (2) in its length, which is due to its action having no fixed limit of time, whereas tragedy endeavours to keep as far as possible within a single circuit of the sun, or something near that. This, I say, is another point of difference between them, though at first the practice in this respect was just the same in tragedies as in epic poems. They differ also (3) in their constituents, some being common to both and others peculiar to tragedy. Hence a judge of good and bad in tragedy is a judge of that in epic poetry also. All the parts of an epic are included in tragedy; but those of tragedy are not all of them to be found in the epic.

VI. Reserving hexameter poetry and comedy for consideration hereafter, let us proceed now to the discussion of tragedy. Before doing so, however, we must gather up the definition resulting from what has been said. A tragedy, then, is the imitation of an action that is serious and also, as having magnitude, complete in itself; in language with pleasurable accessories, each kind brought in separately in the parts of the work; in a dramatic, not in a narrative form; with incidents arousing pity and fear, wherewith to accomplish its catharsis of such emotions.

Here by 'language with pleasurable accessories' I mean that with rhythm and harmony or song superadded; and by 'the kinds separately' I mean that some portions are worked out with verse only, and others in turn with song.

As they act the stories, it follows that in the first place the spectacle (or stage-appearance of the actors) must be some part of the whole; and in the second melody and diction, these two being the means of their imitation. Here by 'diction' I mean merely this, the composition of the verses; and by 'melody,' what is too completely understood to require explanation. But further, the subject represented also is an action; and the action involves agents, who must necessarily have their distinctive qualities both of character and thought, since it is from these that we ascribe certain qualities to their actions. There are in the natural order of things, therefore, two causes, character and thought, of their actions, and consequently of their success or failure in their lives. Now the action (that which was done) is represented in the play by the fable or plot. The fable, in our present sense of the term, is simply this, the combination of the incidents or things done in the story; whereas character is what makes us ascribe certain moral qualities to the agents; and thought is shown in all they say when proving a particular point or, it may be, enunciating a general truth. There are six parts consequently of every tragedy, as a whole, that is, of such or such quality, viz. a fable or plot, characters, diction, thought, spectacle and melody;

two of them arising from the means, one from the manner, and three from the objects of the dramatic imitation; and there is nothing else besides these six. Of these, its formative elements, then, not a few of the dramatists have made due use, as every play, one may say, admits of spectacle, character, fable, diction, melody, and thought.

The most important of the six is the combination of the incidents of the story. Tragedy is essentially an imitation not of persons, but of action and life, of happiness and misery. All human happiness or misery takes the form of action; the end for which we live is a certain kind of activity, not a quality. Character gives us qualities, but it is in our actions—what we do—that we are happy or the reverse. In a play accordingly they do not act in order to portray the characters; they include the characters for the sake of the action. So that it is the action in it, i.e. its fable or plot, that is the end and purpose of the tragedy; and the end is everywhere the chief thing. Besides this, a tragedy is impossible without action, but there may be one without character. The tragedies of most of the moderns are characterless—a defect common among poets of all kinds, and with its counterpart in painting in Zeuxis as compared with Polygnotus; for whereas the latter is strong in character, the work of Zeuxis is devoid of it. And again, one may string together a series of characteristic speeches of the utmost finish as regards diction and thought, and yet fail to produce the true tragic effect; but one will have much better

success with a tragedy which, however inferior in these respects, has a plot, a combination of incidents, in it. And again, the most powerful elements of attraction in tragedy, the peripeties and discoveries, are parts of the plot. A further proof is in the fact that beginners succeed earlier with the diction and characters than with the construction of a story; and the same may be said of nearly all the early dramatists. We maintain, therefore, that the first essential, the life and soul, so to speak, of tragedy is the plot; and that the characters come second. Compare the parallel in painting, where the most beautiful colours laid on without order will not give one the same pleasure as a simple black-and-white sketch of a portrait. We maintain that tragedy is primarily an imitation of action, and that it is mainly for the sake of the action that it imitates the personal agents. Third comes the element of thought, i.e. the power of saying whatever can be said or what is appropriate to the occasion. This is what, in the speeches in tragedy, falls under the arts of politics and rhetoric; for the older poets make their personages discourse like statesmen, and the moderns like rhetoricians. One must not confuse it with character. Character in a play is that which reveals the moral purpose of the agents, i.e. the sort of thing they seek or avoid, where that is not obvious. Hence there is no room for character in a speech on a purely indifferent subject. Thought, on the other hand, is shown in all they say when proving or disproving some particular point, or enunciating some

universal proposition. Fourth among the literary elements is the diction of the personages, i.e. as before explained, the expression of their thoughts in words, which is practically the same thing with verse as with prose. As for the two remaining parts, the melody is the greatest of the pleasurable accessories of tragedy. The spectacle, though an attraction, is the least artistic of all the parts, and has least to do with the art of poetry. The tragic effect is quite possible without a public performance and actors; and besides, the getting-up of the spectacle is more a matter for the costumer than the poet.

VII. Having thus distinguished the parts, let us now consider the proper construction of the fable or plot, as that is at once the first and the most important thing in tragedy. We have laid it down that a tragedy is an imitation of an action that is complete in itself, as a whole of some magnitude; for a whole may be of no magnitude to speak of. Now a whole is that which has beginning, middle, and end. A beginning is that which is not itself necessarily after anything else, and which has naturally something else after it; an end is that which is naturally after something itself, either as its necessary or usual consequent, and with nothing else after it; and a middle, that which is by nature after one thing and has also another after it. A well-constructed plot, therefore, cannot either begin or end at any point one likes; beginning and end in it must be of the forms just described. Again to be beautiful, a living creature, and every whole made up of parts, must not only

present a certain order in its arrangement of parts, but also be of a certain definite magnitude. Beauty is a matter of size and order, and therefore impossible either (1) in a very minute creature, since our perception becomes indistinct as it approaches instantaneity; or (2) in a creature of vast size—one, say, 1000 miles long—as in that case, instead of the object being seen all at once, the unity and wholeness of it is lost to the beholder. Just in the same way, then, as a beautiful whole made up of parts, or a beautiful living creature, must be of some size, a size to be taken in by the eye, so a story or plot must be of some length, but of a length to be taken in by the memory. As for the limit of its length, so far as that is relative to public performances and spectators, it does not fall within the theory of poetry. If they had to perform a hundred tragedies, they would be timed by water-clocks, as they are said to have been at one period. The limit, however, set by the actual nature of the thing is this; the longer the story, consistently with its being comprehensible as a whole, the finer it is by reason of its magnitude. As a rough general formula, 'a length which allows of the hero passing by a series of probable or necessary stages from misfortune to happiness, or from happiness to misfortune,' may suffice as a limit for the magnitude of the story.

VIII. The unity of a plot does not consist, as some suppose, in its having one man as its subject. An infinity of things befall that one man, some of which it is impossible to reduce to unity; and in like man-

ner there are many actions of one man which cannot be made to form one action. One sees, therefore, the mistake of all the poets who have written a *Heracleid*, a *Theseid*, or similar poems. They suppose that because Heracles was one man, the story also of Heracles must be one story. Homer, however, evidently understood this point quite well, whether by art or instinct, just in the same way as he excels the rest in every other respect. In writing an *Odyssey* he did not make the poem cover all that ever befell his hero. It befell him, for instance, to get wounded on Parnassus and also to feign madness at the time of the call to arms; but the two incidents had no probable or necessary connexion with one another. Instead of doing that, he took an action with a unity of the kind we are describing as the subject of the *Odyssey*, as also of the *Iliad*. The truth is that, just as in the other imitative arts one imitation is always of one thing, so in poetry the story, as an imitation of action, must represent one action, a complete whole, with its several incidents so closely connected that the transposal or withdrawal of any one of them will disjoin and dislocate the whole. For that which makes no perceptible difference by its presence or absence is no real part of the whole.

IX. From what we have said it will be seen that the poet's function is to describe not the thing that has happened, but a kind of thing that might happen, i.e. what is possible as being probable or necessary. The distinction between historian and poet is not in the one writing prose and the other verse. You

might put the work of Herodotus into verse, and it would still be a species of history. It consists really in this, that the one describes the thing that has been, and the other a kind of thing that might be. Hence poetry is something more philosophic and of graver import than history, since its statements are of the nature rather of universals, whereas those of history are singulars. By a universal statement I mean one as to what such or such a kind of man will probably or necessarily say or do, which is the aim of poetry, though it affixes proper names to the characters; by a singular statement, one as to what, say, Alcibiades did or had done to him. In comedy this has become clear by this time; it is only when their plot is already made up of probable incidents that they give it a basis of proper names, choosing for the purpose any names that may occur to them, instead of writing like the old iambic poets about particular persons. In tragedy, however, they still adhere to the historic names, and for this reason; what convinces is the possible. Now whereas we are not yet sure as to the possibility of that which has not happened, that which has happened is manifestly possible; else it would not have come to pass. Nevertheless even in tragedy there are some plays with but one or two known names in them, the rest being inventions; and there are some without a single known name, e.g. Agathon's *Antheus*, in which both incidents and names are of the poet's invention; and it is no less delightful on that account. So that one must not aim at a rigid adherence to the tradi-

tional stories on which tragedies are based. It would be absurd, in fact, to do so, as even the known stories are only known to a few, though they are a delight none the less to all. It is evident from the above that the poet must be more the poet of his stories or plots than of his verses, inasmuch as he is a poet by virtue of the imitative element in his work, and it is actions that he imitates. And if he should come to take a subject from actual history, he is none the less a poet for that, since some historic occurrences may very well be in the probable and possible order of things, and it is in that aspect of them that he is their poet.

Of simple plots and actions the episodic are the worst. I call a plot episodic when there is neither probability nor necessity in the sequence of its episodes. Actions of this sort bad poets construct through their own fault, and good ones on account of the players. His work being for public performance, a good poet often stretches out a plot beyond its capabilities, and is thus obliged to twist the sequence of incident.

Tragedy, however, is an imitation not only of a complete action, but also of incidents arousing pity and fear. Such incidents have the very greatest effect on the mind when they occur unexpectedly and at the same time in consequence of one another. There is more of the marvellous in them then than if they happened of themselves or by mere chance. Even matters of chance seem most marvellous if there is an appearance of design as it were in them;

as for instance the statue of Mitys at Argos killed the author of Mitys' death by falling down on him when a looker-on at a public spectacle; for incidents like that we think to be not without a meaning. A plot, therefore, of this sort is necessarily finer than others.

X. Plots are either simple or complex, since the actions they represent are naturally of this twofold description. The action proceeding in the way defined as one continuous whole I call simple when the change in the hero's fortunes takes place without peripety or discovery; and complex, when it involves one or the other, or both. These should each of them arise out of the structure of the plot itself, so as to be the consequence, necessary or probable, of the antecedents. There is a great difference between a thing happening *propter hoc* and *post hoc*.

XI. A peripety is the change from one state of things within the play to its opposite of the kind described, and that too in the way we are saying, in the probable or necessary sequence of events; as it is for instance in *Oedipus*. Here the opposite state of things is produced by the messenger, who, coming to gladden Oedipus and to remove his fears as to his mother, reveals the secret of his birth. And in *Lynceus*, just as he is being led off for execution, with Danaus at his side to put him to death, the incidents preceding this bring it about that he is saved and Danaus put to death. A discovery is, as the very word implies, a change from ignorance to knowledge, and thus to either love or hate, in the personages

marked for good or evil fortune. The finest form of discovery is one attended by peripeties, like that which goes with the discovery in *Oedipus*. There are no doubt other forms of it; what we have said may happen in a way in reference to inanimate things, even things of a very casual kind; and it is also possible to discover whether some one has done or not done something. But the form most directly connected with the plot and the action of the piece is the first-mentioned. This, with a peripety, will arouse either pity or fear, actions of that nature being what tragedy is assumed to represent; and it will also serve to bring about the happy or unhappy ending. The discovery, then, being of persons, it may be that of one party only to the other, the latter being already known; or both the parties may have to discover themselves. Iphigenia, for instance, was discovered to Orestes by sending the letter; and another discovery was required to reveal him to Iphigenia.

Two parts of the plot, then, peripety and discovery, are on matters of this sort. A third part is suffering, which we may define as an action of a destructive or painful nature, such as murders on the stage, tortures, woundings, and the like. The other two have been already explained.

XII. The parts of tragedy to be treated as formative elements in the whole were mentioned in a previous chapter. From the point of view, however, of its quantity, i.e. the separate sections into which it is divided, a tragedy has the following parts:

prologue, episode, exode, and a choral portion, distinguished into parode and stasimon; these two are common to all tragedies, whereas songs from the stage and *commoe* are only found in some. The prologue is all that precedes the parode of the chorus; an episode, all that comes in between two whole choral songs; the exode, all that follows after the last choral song. In the choral portion the parode is the whole first statement of the chorus; a stasimon, a song of the chorus without anapaests or trochees; a *commos*, a lamentation sung by chorus and actor in concert. The parts of tragedy to be used as formative elements in the whole we have already mentioned. The above are its parts from the point of view of its quantity, or the separate sections into which it is divided.

XIII. The next points after what we have said above will be these: (1) what is the poet to aim at, and what is he to avoid, in constructing his plots? and (2) what are the conditions on which the tragic effect depends? We assume that for the finest form of tragedy the plot must be not simple but complex, and further that it must imitate actions arousing pity and fear, since that is the distinctive function of this kind of imitation. It follows, therefore, that there are three forms of plot to be avoided. (1) A good man must not be seen passing from happiness to misery, or (2) a bad man from misery to happiness. The first situation is not fear-inspiring or piteous, but simply odious to us. The second is the most untragic that can be; it has no one of the

requisites of tragedy; it does not appeal either to the human feeling in us, or to our pity, or to our fears. Nor on the other hand should (3) an extremely bad man be seen falling from happiness into misery. Such a story may arouse the human feeling in us, but it will not move us to either pity or fear. Pity is occasioned by undeserved misfortune, and fear by that of one like ourselves; so that there will be nothing either piteous or fear-inspiring in the situation. There remains, then, the intermediate kind of personage, a man not pre-eminently virtuous and just, whose misfortune, however, is brought upon him not by vice and depravity, but by some error of judgement, of the number of those in the enjoyment of great reputation and prosperity; e.g. Oedipus, Thyestes, and the men of note of similar families. The perfect plot, accordingly, must have a single, and not (as some tell us) a double issue; the change in the hero's fortunes must be not from misery to happiness, but on the contrary from happiness to misery; and the cause of it must lie not in any depravity, but in some great error on his part; the man himself being either such as we have described, or better, not worse, than that. Fact also confirms our theory. Though the poets began by accepting any tragic story that came to hand, in these days the finest tragedies are always on the story of some few houses, on that of Alcmeon, Oedipus, Orestes, Meleager, Thyestes, Telephus, or any others that may have been involved, as either agents or sufferers, in some deed of horror. The theoretically best

tragedy, then, has a plot of this description. The critics, therefore, are wrong, who blame Euripides for taking this line in his tragedies, and giving many of them an unhappy ending. It is, as we have said, the right line to take. The best proof is this: on the stage, and in the public performances, such plays, properly worked out, are seen to be the most truly tragic; and Euripides, even if his execution be faulty in every other point, is seen to be nevertheless the most tragic certainly of the dramatists. After this comes the construction of plot which some rank first, one with a double story (like the *Odyssey*) and an opposite issue for the good and the bad personages. It is ranked as first only through the weakness of the audiences. The poets merely follow their public, writing as its wishes dictate. But the pleasure here is not that of tragedy. It belongs rather to comedy, where the bitterest enemies in the piece (e.g. Orestes and Aegisthus) walk off good friends at the end, with no slaying of any one by any one.

XIV. The tragic fear and pity may be aroused by the spectacle; but they may also be aroused by the very structure and incidents of the play; which is the better way and shows the better poet. The plot in fact should be so framed that, even without seeing the things take place, he who simply hears the account of them shall be filled with horror and pity at the incidents; which is just the effect that the mere recital of the story in *Oedipus* would have on one. To produce this same effect by means of the spectacle is less artistic, and requires extraneous

aid. Those, however, who make use of the spectacle to put before us that which is merely monstrous and not productive of fear are wholly out of touch with tragedy. Not every kind of pleasure should be required of a tragedy, but only its own proper pleasure.

The tragic pleasure is that of pity and fear, and the poet has to produce it by a work of imitation; it is clear, therefore, that the causes should be included in the incidents of his story. Let us see, then, what kinds of incident strike one as horrible, or rather as piteous. In a deed of this description the parties must necessarily be either friends, or enemies, or indifferent to one another. Now when enemy does it on enemy, there is nothing to move us to pity either in his doing or in his meditating the deed, except so far as the actual pain of the sufferer is concerned; and the same is true when the parties are indifferent to one another. Whenever the tragic deed, however, is done within the family, when murder or the like is done or meditated by brother on brother, by son on father, by mother on son, or son on mother, these are the situations the poet should seek after. The traditional stories, accordingly, must be kept as they are, e.g. the murder of Clytaemnestra by Orestes and of Eriphyle by Alcmeon.

At the same time even with these there is something left to the poet himself; it is for him to devise the right way of treating them. Let us explain more clearly what we mean by 'the right way.' The deed of horror may be done by the doer knowingly and

consciously, as in the old poets, and in Medea's murder of her children in Euripides. Or he may do it, but in ignorance of his relationship, and discover that afterwards, as does the Oedipus in Sophocles. Here the deed is outside the play; but it may be within it, like the act of the Alcmeon in Astydamas, or that of the Telegonus in *Ulysses Wounded*. A third possibility is for one meditating some deadly injury to another, in ignorance of his relationship, to make the discovery in time to draw back. These exhaust the possibilities, since the deed must necessarily be either done or not done, and either knowingly or unknowingly.

The worst situation is when the personage is with full knowledge on the point of doing the deed, and leaves it undone. It is odious and also, through the absence of suffering, untragic. Hence it is that no one is made to act thus except in some few instances, e.g. Haemon and Creon in *Antigone*. Next after this comes the actual perpetration of the deed meditated. A better situation than that, however, is for the deed to be done in ignorance, and the relationship discovered afterwards, since there is nothing odious in it, and the discovery will serve to astound us. But the best of all is the last; what we have in *Cresphontes*, for example, where Merope, on the point of slaying her son, recognizes him in time; in *Iphigenia*, where sister and brother are in a like position; and in *Helle*, where the son recognizes his mother, when on the point of giving her up to her enemy. This will explain why our tragedies are restricted, as we said

just now, to such a small number of families. It was accident rather than art that led the poets in quest of subjects to embody this kind of incident in their plots. They are still obliged, accordingly, to have recourse to the families in which such horrors have occurred. On the construction of the plot, and the kind of plot required for tragedy, enough has now been said.

XV. In the characters there are four points to aim at. First and foremost, that they shall be good. There will be an element of character in the play, if, as has been observed, what a personage says or does reveals a certain moral purpose, and a good element of character if the purpose so revealed is good. Such goodness is possible in every type of personage, even in a woman or a slave, though the one is perhaps an inferior, and the other a wholly worthless being. The second point is to make them appropriate. The character before us may be, say, manly; but it is not appropriate in a female character to be manly, or clever. The third is to make them like the reality, which is not the same as their being good and appropriate, in our sense of the term. The fourth is to make them consistent and the same throughout. Even if inconsistency be part of the man before one for imitation as presenting that form of character, he should still be consistently inconsistent. We have an instance of baseness of character, not required for the story, in the Menelaus in *Orestes;* of the incongruous and inappropriate in the lamentation of Ulysses in *Scylla*, and in the (clever) speech

of Melanippe; and of inconsistency in *Iphigenia at Aulis*, where Iphigenia the suppliant is utterly unlike the later Iphigenia. The right thing, however, is in the characters just as in the incidents of the play to endeavour always after the necessary or the probable; so that whenever such-and-such a personage says or does such-and-such a thing, it shall be the probable or necessary outcome of his character; and whenever this incident follows on that, it shall be either the necessary or the probable consequence of it. From this one sees (to digress for a moment) that the dénouement also should arise out of the plot itself, and not depend on a stage-artifice, as in *Medea*, or in the story of the (arrested) departure of the Greeks in the *Iliad*. The artifice must be reserved for matters outside the play: for past events beyond human knowledge, or events yet to come, which require to be foretold or announced, since it is the privilege of the gods to know everything. There should be nothing improbable among the actual incidents. If it be unavoidable, however, it should be outside the tragedy, like the improbability in the *Oedipus* of Sophocles. But to return to the characters, as tragedy is an imitation of personages better than the ordinary man, we in our way should follow the example of good portrait-painters, who reproduce the distinctive features of a man, and at the same time, without losing the likeness, make him handsomer than he is. The poet in like manner, in portraying men quick or slow to anger, or with similar infirmities of character, must

know how to represent them as such, and at the same time as good men, as Agathon and Homer have represented Achilles. All these rules one must keep in mind throughout, and further, those also for such points of stage-effect as directly depend on the art of the poet, since in these too one may often make mistakes. Enough, however, has been said on the subject in one of our published writings.

XVI. Discovery in general has been explained already. As for the species of discovery, the first to be noted is (1) the least artistic form of it, of which the poets make most use through mere lack of invention, discovery by signs or marks. Of these signs some are congenital, like the 'lance-head which the Earth-born have on them,' or 'stars,' such as Carcinus brings in in his *Thyestes;* others acquired after birth, these latter being either marks on the body, e.g. scars, or external tokens, like necklaces, or to take another sort of instance, the ark in the discovery in *Tyro*. Even these, however, admit of two uses, a better and a worse. The scar of Ulysses is an instance. The discovery of him through it is made in one way by the nurse and in another by the swineherds. A discovery using signs as a means of assurance is less artistic, as indeed are all such as imply reflexion; whereas one bringing them in all of a sudden, as in the *Bath Story*, is of a better order. Next after these are (2) discoveries made directly by the poet, which are inartistic for that very reason; e.g. Orestes' discovery of himself in *Iphigenia*. Whereas his sister reveals who she is by the letter, Orestes

is made to say himself what the poet rather than the story demands. This, therefore, is not far removed from the first-mentioned fault, since he might have presented certain tokens as well. Another instance is the 'shuttle's voice' in the *Tereus* of Sophocles. (3) A third species is discovery through memory, from a man's consciousness being awakened by something seen or heard. Thus in *The Cyprioe* of Dicaeogenes, the sight of the picture makes the man burst into tears; and in the *Tale of Alcinous*, hearing the harper, Ulysses is reminded of the past and weeps, the discovery of them being the result. (4) A fourth kind is Discovery through reasoning; e.g. in *The Choephoroe:* 'One like me is here; there is no one like me but Orestes; he, therefore, must be here.' Or that which Polyidus the Sophist suggested for *Iphigenia*, since it was natural for Orestes to reflect: 'My sister was sacrificed, and I am to be sacrificed like her.' Or that in the *Tydeus* of Theodectes: 'I came to find a son, and am to die myself.' Or that in *The Phinidae:* on seeing the place the women inferred their fate, that they were to die there, since they had also been exposed there. (5) There is, too, a composite discovery arising from bad reasoning on the side of the other party. An instance of it is in *Ulysses the False Messenger:* he said he should know the bow, which he had not seen; but to suppose from that that he would know it again (as though he had once seen it) was bad reasoning. (6) The best of all discoveries, however, is that arising from the incidents themselves, when the great surprise comes

about through a probable incident, like that in the *Oedipus* of Sophocles, and also in *Iphigenia*, for it was not improbable that she should wish to have a letter taken home. These last are the only discoveries independent of the artifice of signs and necklaces. Next after them come discoveries through reasoning.

XVII. At the time when he is constructing his plots and engaged on the diction in which they are worked out, the poet should remember (1) to put the actual scenes as far as possible before his eyes. In this way, seeing everything with the vividness of an eye-witness as it were, he will devise what is appropriate, and be least likely to overlook incongruities. This is shown by what was censured in Carcinus, the return of Amphiaraus from the sanctuary. It would have passed unnoticed if it had not been actually seen by the audience; but on the stage his play failed, the incongruity of the incident offending the spectators. (2) As far as may be, too, the poet should even act his story with the very gestures of his personages. Given the same natural qualifications, he who feels the emotions to be described will be the most convincing. Distress and anger, for instance, are portrayed most truthfully by one who is feeling them at the moment. Hence it is that poetry demands a man with a special gift for it, or else one with a touch of madness in him. The former can easily assume the required mood, and the latter may be actually beside himself with emotion. (3) His story, again, whether already made

or of his own making, he should first simplify and reduce to a universal form, before proceeding to lengthen it out by the insertion of episodes. The following will show how the universal element in *Iphigenia*, for instance, may be viewed. A certain maiden having been offered in sacrifice, and spirited away from her sacrificers into another land, where the custom was to sacrifice all strangers to the Goddess, she was made there the priestess of this rite. Long after that the brother of the priestess happened to come. The fact, however, of the oracle having for a certain reason bidden him go thither, and his object in going, are outside the plot of the play. On his coming he was arrested, and about to be sacrificed, when he revealed who he was, either as Euripides puts it, or (as suggested by Polyidus) by the not improbable exclamation, 'So I too am doomed to be sacrificed, as my sister was'; and the disclosure led to his salvation. This done, the next thing, after the proper names have been fixed as a basis for the story, is to work in episodes or accessory incidents. One must mind, however, that the episodes are appropriate, like the fit of madness in Orestes, which led to his arrest, and the purifying, which brought about his salvation. In plays, then, the episodes are short; in epic poetry they serve to lengthen out the poem. The argument of the *Odyssey* is not a long one. A certain man has been abroad many years. Poseidon is ever on the watch for him, and he is all alone. Matters at home too have come to this, that his substance is being wasted and his son's

death plotted by suitors to his wife. Then he arrives there himself after his grievous sufferings; reveals himself, and falls on his enemies; and the end is his salvation and their death. This being all that is proper to the *Odyssey*, everything else in it is episode.

XVIII. (4) There is a further point to be borne in mind. Every tragedy is in part complication and in part dénouement; the incidents before the opening scene, and often certain also of those within the play, forming the complication; and the rest the dénouement. By complication I mean all from the beginning of the story to the point just before the change in the hero's fortunes; by dénouement, all from the beginning of the change to the end. In the *Lynceus* of Theodectes, for instance, the complication includes, together with the presupposed incidents, the seizure of the child and that in turn of the parents; and the dénouement all from the indictment for the murder to the end. Now it is right, when one speaks of a tragedy as the same or not the same as another, to do so on the ground before all else of their plot, i.e. as having the same or not the same complication and dénouement. Yet there are many dramatists who, after a good complication, fail in the dénouement. But it is necessary for both points of construction to be always duly mastered. (5) There are four distinct species of tragedy, that being the number of the constituents also that have been mentioned: first, the complex tragedy, which is all peripety and discovery; second, the tragedy of suffering, e.g. the *Ajaxes* and *Ixions;* third, the tragedy

of character, e.g. *The Phthiotides* and *Peleus*. The fourth constituent is that of 'spectacle,' exemplified in *The Phorcides*, in *Prometheus*, and in all plays with the scene laid in the nether world. The poet's aim, then, should be to combine every element of interest, if possible, or else the more important and the major part of them. This is now especially necessary owing to the unfair criticism to which the poet is subjected in these days. Just because there have been poets before him strong in the several species of tragedy, the critics now expect the one man to surpass that which was the strong point of each one of his predecessors.

(6) One should also remember what has been said more than once, and not write a tragedy on an epic body of incident (i.e. one with a plurality of stories in it), by attempting to dramatize, for instance, the entire story of the *Iliad*. In the epic, owing to its scale, every part is treated at proper length; with a drama, however, on the same story the result is very disappointing. This is shown by the fact that all who have dramatized the fall of Ilium in its entirety, and not part by part, like Euripides, or the whole of the Niobe story, instead of a portion, like Aeschylus, either fail utterly or have but ill success on the stage; for that and that alone was enough to ruin even a play by Agathon. Yet in their peripeties, as also in their simple plots, the poets I mean show wonderful skill in aiming at the kind of effect they desire, a tragic situation that arouses the human feeling in one, like the clever villain (e.g. Sisyphus)

deceived, or the brave wrongdoer worsted. This is probable, however, only in Agathon's sense, when he speaks of the probability of even improbabilities coming to pass. (7) The chorus too should be regarded as one of the actors; it should be an integral part of the whole, and take a share in the action, that which it has in Sophocles rather than in Euripides. With the later poets, however, the songs in a play of theirs have no more to do with the plot of that than of any other tragedy. Hence it is that they are now singing intercalary pieces, a practice first introduced by Agathon. And yet what real difference is there between singing such intercalary pieces, and attempting to fit in a speech, or even a whole act, from one play into another?

XIX. The plot and characters having been discussed, it remains to consider the diction and thought. As for the thought, we may assume what is said of it in our art of rhetoric, as it belongs more properly to that department of inquiry. The thought of the personages is shown in everything to be effected by their language: in every effort to prove or disprove, to arouse emotion (pity, fear, anger, and the like), or to maximize or minimize things. It is clear, also, that their mental procedure must be on the same lines in their actions likewise, whenever they wish them to arouse pity or horror, or have a look of importance or probability. The only difference is that with the act the impression has to be made without explanation, whereas with the spoken word it has to be produced by the speaker and result from his

language. What, indeed would be the good of the speaker, if things appeared in the required light even apart from anything he says?

As regards the diction, one subject for inquiry under this head is the turns given to the language when spoken; e.g. the difference between command and prayer, simple statement and threat, question and answer, and so forth. The theory of such matters, however, belongs to elocution and the professors of that art. Whether the poet knows these things or not, his art as a poet is never seriously criticized on that account. What fault can one see in Homer's 'Sing of the wrath, Goddess'?—which Protagoras has criticized as being a command where a prayer was meant, since to bid one do or not do, he tells us, is a command. Let us pass over this, then, as appertaining to another art, and not to that of poetry.

XX. The diction viewed as a whole is made up of the following parts: the letter (or ultimate element), the syllable, the conjunction, the article, the noun, the verb, the case, and the speech. . . .

XXI. Nouns are of two kinds, either (1) simple, i.e. made up of non-significant parts, like the word γῆ, or (2) double. In the latter case the word may be made up either of a significant and a non-significant part (a distinction which disappears in the compound), or of two significant parts. It is possible also to have triple, quadruple or higher compounds, like most of our amplified names; e.g. 'Hermocaïcoxanthus' and the like. Whatever its structure, a Noun must always be either (1) the ordinary word

for the thing, or (2) a strange word, or (3) a metaphor, or (4) an ornamental word, or (5) a coined word, or (6) a word lengthened out, or (7) curtailed, or (8) altered in form. By the ordinary word I mean that in general use in a country; and by a strange word, one in use elsewhere. . . .

Metaphor consists in giving the thing a name that belongs to something else, the transference being either from genus to species, or from species to genus, or from species to species, or on grounds of analogy. That from genus to species is exemplified in 'Here stands my ship,' for lying at anchor is the 'standing' of a particular kind of thing; that from species to genus in 'Truly ten thousand good deeds has Ulysses wrought,' where 'ten thousand,' which is a particular large number, is put in place of the generic 'a large number'; that from species to species in 'Drawing the life with the bronze,' and in 'Severing with the enduring bronze,' where the poet uses 'draw' in the sense of 'sever' and 'sever' in that of 'draw,' both words meaning to 'take away' something. That from analogy is possible whenever there are four terms so related that the second (B) is to the first (A), as the fourth (D) to the third (C); for one may then metaphorically put B in lieu of D, and D in lieu of B. Now and then, too, they qualify the metaphor by adding on to it that to which the word it supplants is relative. Thus a cup (B) is in relation to Dionysus (A) what a shield (D) is to Ares (C). The cup accordingly will be metaphorically described as the 'shield *of* Dionysus' (D+A), and the shield

as the 'cup *of* Ares' (B+C). Or, to take another instance, as old age (D) is to life (C), so is evening (B) to day (A). One will accordingly describe evening (B) as the 'old age of the day' (D+A), or by the Empedoclean equivalent, and old age (D) as the 'evening' or 'sunset of life' (B+C). It may be that some of the terms thus related have no special name of their own, but for all that they will be metaphorically described in just the same way. Thus to cast forth seed-corn is called 'sowing'; but to cast forth its flame, as said of the sun, has no special name. This nameless act (B), however, stands in just the same relation to its object, sunlight (A), as sowing (D) to the seed-corn (C). Hence the expression in the poet, 'sowing around a god-created *flame*' (D+A). There is also another form of qualified metaphor. Having given the thing the alien name, one may by a negative addition deny of it one of the attributes naturally associated with its new name. An instance of this would be to call the shield not the 'cup *of* Ares,' as in the former case, but a 'cup that holds no wine.' . . . A coined word is a name which, being quite unknown among a people, is given by the poet himself; e.g. (for there are some words that seem to be of this origin) horns, and priest. . . .

XXII. The perfection of diction is for it to be at once clear and not mean. The clearest indeed is that made up of the ordinary words for things; but it is mean, as is shown by the poetry of Cleophon and Sthenelus. On the other hand the diction becomes

distinguished and non-prosaic by the use of unfamiliar terms, i.e. strange words, metaphors, lengthened forms, and everything that deviates from the ordinary modes of speech. But a whole statement in such terms will be either a riddle or a barbarism, a riddle if made up of metaphors, a barbarism if made up of strange words. The very nature indeed of a riddle is this, to describe a fact in an impossible combination of words (which cannot be done with the real names for things, but can be with their metaphorical substitutes); e.g. 'I saw a man glue brass on another with fire,' and the like. The corresponding use of strange words results in a barbarism. A certain admixture, accordingly, of unfamiliar terms is necessary. These, the strange word, the metaphor, the ornamental equivalent, etc., will save the language from seeming mean and prosaic, while the ordinary words in it will secure the requisite clearness. What helps most, however, to render the diction at once clear and non-prosaic is the use of the lengthened, curtailed, and altered forms of words. Their deviation from the ordinary words will, by making the language unlike that in general use, give it a non-prosaic appearance; and their having much in common with the words in general use will give it the quality of clearness. It is not right, then, to condemn these modes of speech, and ridicule the poet for using them, as some have done; e.g. the elder Euclid, who said it was easy to make poetry if one were to be allowed to lengthen the words in the statement itself as much as one likes, a procedure

he caricatured. . . . A too apparent use of these licences has certainly a ludicrous effect, but they are not alone in that; the rule of moderation applies to all the constituents of the poetic vocabulary; even with metaphors, strange words, and the rest, the effect will be the same, if one uses them improperly and with a view to provoking laughter. The proper use of them is a very different thing. To realize the difference, one should take an epic verse and see how it reads when the normal words are introduced. The same should be done too with the strange word, the metaphor, and the rest; for one has only to put the ordinary words in their place to see the truth of what we are saying. The same iambic, for instance, is found in Aeschylus and Euripides, and as it stands in the former it is a poor line; whereas Euripides, by the change of a single word, the substitution of a strange for what is by usage the ordinary word, has made it seem a fine one. . . . Add to this that Ariphrades used to ridicule the tragedians for introducing expressions unknown in the language of common life. . . . The mere fact of their not being in ordinary speech gives the diction a non-prosaic character; but Ariphrades was unaware of that. It is a great thing, indeed, to make a proper use of these poetical forms, as also of compounds and strange words. But the greatest thing by far is to be a master of metaphor. It is the one thing that cannot be learnt from others; and it is also a sign of genius, since a good metaphor implies an intuitive perception of the similarity in dissimilars.

Of the kinds of words we have enumerated it may be observed that compounds are most in place in the dithyramb, strange words in heroic, and metaphors in iambic poetry. Heroic poetry, indeed, may avail itself of them all. But in iambic verse, which models itself as far as possible on the spoken language, only those kinds of words are in place which are allowable also in an oration, i.e. the ordinary word, the metaphor, and the ornamental equivalent.

XXIII. Let this, then, suffice as an account of tragedy, the art imitating by means of action on the stage. As for the poetry which merely narrates, or imitates by means of versified language (without action), it is evident that it has several points in common with tragedy.

The construction of its stories should clearly be like that in a drama; they should be based on a single action, one that is a complete whole in itself, with a beginning, middle, and end, so as to enable the work to produce its own proper pleasure with all the organic unity of a living creature. Nor should one suppose that there is anything like them in our usual histories. A history has to deal not with one action, but with one period and all that happened in that to one or more persons, however disconnected the several events may have been. Just as two events may take place at the same time, e.g. the sea-fight off Salamis and the battle with the Carthaginians in Sicily, without converging to the same end, so too of two consecutive events one may sometimes come after the other with no one end as their

common issue. Nevertheless most of our epic poets, one may say, ignore the distinction. Herein, then, to repeat what we have said before, we have a further proof of Homer's marvellous superiority to the rest. He did not attempt to deal even with the Trojan war in its entirety, though it was a whole with a definite beginning and end, through a feeling apparently that it was too long a story to be taken in in one view, or if not that, too complicated from the variety of incident in it. As it is, he has singled out one section of the whole. Many of the other incidents, however, he brings in as episodes, using the catalogue of the ships, for instance, and other episodes to relieve the uniformity of his narrative. As for the other epic poets, they treat of one man, or one period, or else of an action which, although one, has a multiplicity of parts in it. This last is what the authors of the *Cypria* and *Little Iliad* have done. And the result is that, whereas the *Iliad* or *Odyssey* supplies materials for only one, or at most two tragedies, the *Cypria* does that for several, and the *Little Iliad* for more than eight: for an *Adjudgment of Arms*, a *Philoctetes*, a *Neoptolemus*, a *Eurypylus*, a *Ulysses as Beggar*, a *Laconian Women*, a *Fall of Ilium*, and a *Departure of the Fleet*, as also a *Sinon*, and a *Women of Troy*.

XXIV. Besides this, epic poetry must divide into the same species as tragedy; it must be either simple or complex, a story of character or one of suffering. Its parts, too, with the exception of song and spectacle, must be the same, as it requires peripeties,

discoveries, and scenes of suffering just like tragedy. Lastly, the thought and diction in it must be good in their way. All these elements appear in Homer first; and he has made due use of them. His two poems are each examples of construction, the *Iliad* simple and a story of suffering, the *Odyssey* complex (there is discovery throughout it) and a story of character. And they are more than this, since in diction and thought too they surpass all other poems.

There is, however, a difference in the epic as compared with tragedy, (1) in its length, and (2) in its metre. (1) As to its length, the limit already suggested will suffice; it must be possible for the beginning and end of the work to be taken in in one view—a condition which will be fulfilled if the poem be shorter than the old epics, and about as long as the series of tragedies offered for one hearing. For the extension of its length epic poetry has a special advantage, of which it makes large use. In a play one cannot represent an action with a number of parts going on simultaneously; one is limited to the part on the stage and connected with the actors. Whereas in epic poetry the narrative form makes it possible for one to describe a number of simultaneous incidents; and these, if germane to the subject, increase the body of the poem. This then is a gain to the epic, tending to give it grandeur and also variety of interest and room for episodes of diverse kinds. Uniformity of incident by the satiety it soon creates is apt to ruin tragedies on the stage. (2) As for its metre, the heroic has been assigned it from

experience. Were any one to attempt a narrative poem in some one, or in several, of the other metres, the incongruity of the thing would be apparent. The heroic in fact is the gravest and weightiest of metres, which is what makes it more tolerant than the rest of strange words and metaphors, that also being a point in which the narrative form of poetry goes beyond all others. The iambic and trochaic, on the other hand, are metres of movement, the one representing that of life and action, the other that of the dance. Still more unnatural would it appear, if one were to write an epic in a medley of metres, as Chaeremon did. Hence it is that no one has ever written a long story in any but heroic verse. Nature herself, as we have said, teaches us to select the metre appropriate to such a story.

Homer, admirable as he is in every other respect, is especially so in this, that he alone among epic poets is not unaware of the part to be played by the poet himself in the poem. The poet should say very little *in propria persona*, as he is no imitator when doing that. Whereas the other poets are perpetually coming forward in person, and say but little, and that only here and there, as imitators, Homer after a brief preface brings in forthwith a man, a woman, or some other character, no one of them characterless, but each with distinctive characteristics.

The marvellous is certainly required in tragedy. The epic, however, affords more opening for the improbable, the chief factor in the marvellous, because in it the agents are not visibly before one.

The scene of the pursuit of Hector would be ridiculous on the stage—the Greeks halting instead of pursuing him, and Achilles shaking his head to stop them; but in the poem the absurdity is overlooked. The marvellous, however, is a cause of pleasure, as is shown by the fact that we all tell a story with additions, in the belief that we are doing our hearers a pleasure. Homer more than any other has taught the rest of us the art of framing lies in the right way. I mean the use of paralogism. Whenever, if A is or happens, a consequent, B, is or happens, men's notion is that, if the B is, the A also is; but that is a false conclusion. Accordingly, if A is untrue, but there is something else, B, that on the assumption of its truth follows as its consequent, the right thing then is to add on the B. Just because we know the truth of the consequent, we are in our own minds led on to the erroneous inference of the truth of the antecedent. Here is an instance, from the *Bath Story* in the *Odyssey*.

A likely impossibility is always preferable to an unconvincing possibility. The story should never be made up of improbable incidents; there should be nothing of the sort in it. If, however, such incidents are unavoidable, they should be outside the piece, like the hero's ignorance in *Oedipus* of the circumstances of Laius' death; not within it, like the report of the Pythian games in *Electra*, or the man's having come to Mysia from Tegea without uttering a word on the way, in *The Mysians*. So that it is ridiculous to say that one's plot would have been spoilt without

them, since it is fundamentally wrong to make up such plots. If the poet has taken such a plot, however, and one sees that he might have put it in a more probable form, he is guilty of absurdity as well as a fault of art. Even in the *Odyssey* the improbabilities in the setting ashore of Ulysses would be clearly intolerable in the hands of an inferior poet. As it is, the poet conceals them, his other excellences veiling their absurdity. Elaborate diction, however, is required only in places where there is no action, and no character or thought to be revealed. Where there is character or thought, on the other hand, an over-ornate diction tends to obscure them.

XXV. As regards problems and their solutions, one may see the number and nature of the assumptions on which they proceed by viewing the matter in the following way. (1) The poet being an imitator just like the painter or other maker of likenesses, he must necessarily in all instances represent things in one or other of three aspects, either as they were or are, or as they are said or thought to be or to have been, or as they ought to be. (2) All this he does in language, with an admixture, it may be, of strange words and metaphors, as also of the various modified forms of words, since the use of these is conceded in poetry. (3) It is to be remembered, too, that there is not the same kind of correctness in poetry as in politics, or indeed any other art. There is, however, within the limits of poetry itself a possibility of two kinds of error, the one directly, the

other only accidentally connected with the art. If the poet meant to describe the thing correctly, and failed through lack of power of expression, his art itself is at fault. But if it was through his having meant to describe it in some incorrect way (e.g. to make the horse in movement have both right legs thrown forward) that the technical error (one in a matter of, say, medicine or some other special science), or impossibilities of whatever kind they may be, have got into his description, his error in that case is not in the essentials of the poetic art. These, therefore, must be the premisses of the solutions in answer to the criticisms involved in the problems.

As to the criticisms relating to the poet's art itself, any impossibilities there may be in his descriptions of things are faults. But from another point of view they are justifiable, if they serve the end of poetry itself, if (to assume what we have said of that end) they make the effect of some portion of the work more astounding. The pursuit of Hector is an instance in point. If, however, the poetic end might have been as well or better attained without sacrifice of technical correctness in such matters, the impossibility is not to be justified, since the description should be, if it can, entirely free from error. One may ask, too, whether the error is in a matter directly or only accidentally connected with the poetic art, since it is a lesser error in an artist not to know, for instance, that the hind has no horns, than to produce an unrecognizable picture of one.

If the poet's description be criticized as not true to fact, one may urge perhaps that the object ought to be as described—an answer like that of Sophocles, who said that he drew men as they ought to be, and Euripides as they were. If the description, however, be neither true nor of the thing as it ought to be, the answer must be then, that it is in accordance with opinion. The tales about gods, for instance, may be as wrong as Xenophanes thinks, neither true nor the better thing to say; but they are certainly in accordance with opinion. Of other statements in poetry one may perhaps say, not that they are better than the truth, but that the fact was so at the time; e.g. the description of the arms, 'their spears stood upright, butt-end upon the ground'; for that was the usual way of fixing them then, as it is still with the Illyrians. As for the question whether something said or done in a poem is morally right or not, in dealing with that one should consider not only the intrinsic quality of the actual word or deed, but also the person who says or does it, the person to whom he says or does it, the time, the means, and the motive of the agent, whether he does it to attain a greater good, or to avoid a greater evil.

Other criticisms one must meet by considering the language of the poet: (1) by the assumption of a strange word . . . as where Homer may perhaps mean not mules, but sentinels; . . . or mean perhaps, not that Dolon's body was deformed, but that his face was ugly. . . . A worker in iron we call a 'brazier'; and it is on the same principle that Gany-

mede is described as the 'wine-server' of Zeus, though the gods do not drink wine. This latter, however, may be an instance of metaphor. But whenever also a word seems to imply some contradiction, it is necessary to reflect how many ways there may be of understanding it in the passage in question, . . . whether by taking it in this sense or in that one will best avoid the fault of which Glaucon speaks: 'They start with some improbable presumption; and having so decreed it themselves, proceed to draw inferences, and censure the poet as though he had actually said whatever they happen to believe, if his statement conflicts with their own notion of things.' This is how Homer's silence about Icarius has been treated. Starting with the notion of his having been a Lacedaemonian, the critics think it strange for Telemachus not to have met him when he went to Lacedaemon; whereas the fact may have been as the Cephallenians say, that the wife of Ulysses was of a Cephallenian family, and that her father's name was Icadius, not Icarius. So that it is probably a mistake of the critics that has given rise to the problem.

Speaking generally, one has to justify (1) the impossible by reference to the requirements of poetry, or to the better, or to opinion. For the purposes of poetry a convincing impossibility is preferable to an unconvincing possibility; and if men such as Zeuxis depicted be impossible, the answer is that it is better they should be like that, as the artist ought to improve on his model. (2) The improbable one has

to justify either by showing it to be in accordance with opinion, or by urging that at times it is not improbable; for there is a probability of things happening also against probability. (3) The contradictions found in the poet's language one should first test as one does an opponent's confutation in a dialectical argument, so as to see whether he means the same thing, in the same relation, and in the same sense, before admitting that he has contradicted either something he has said himself or what a man of sound sense assumes as true. But there is no possible apology for improbability of plot or depravity of character when they are not necessary and no use is made of them, like the improbability in the appearance of Aegeus in *Medea* and the baseness of Menelaus in *Orestes*. The objections, then, of critics start with faults of five kinds: the allegation is always that something is either (1) impossible, (2) improbable, (3) corrupting, (4) contradictory, or (5) against technical correctness. The answers to these objections must be sought under one or other of the above-mentioned heads, which are twelve in number.

XXVI. The question may be raised whether the epic or the tragic is the higher form of imitation. It may be argued that, if the less vulgar is the higher, and the less vulgar is always that which addresses the better public, an art addressing any and every one is of a very vulgar order. It is a belief that their public cannot see the meaning, unless they add something themselves, that causes the perpetual

movements of the performers—bad flute-players, for instance, rolling about, if quoit-throwing is to be represented, and pulling at the conductor, if Scylla is the subject of the piece. Tragedy, then, is said to be an art of this order, to be in fact just what the later actors were in the eyes of their predecessors; for Mynniscus used to call Callippides 'the ape,' because he thought he so overacted his parts; and a similar view was taken of Pindarus also. All tragedy, however, is said to stand to the epic as the newer to the older school of actors. The one, accordingly, is said to address a cultivated audience, which does not need the accompaniment of gesture; the other, an uncultivated one. If, therefore, tragedy is a vulgar art, it must clearly be lower than the epic.

The answer to this is twofold. In the first place, one may urge (1) that the censure does not touch the art of the dramatic poet, but only that of his interpreter; for it is quite possible to overdo the gesturing even in an epic recital, as did Sosistratus, and in a singing contest, as did Mnasitheus of Opus; (2) that one should not condemn all movement, unless one means to condemn even the dance, but only that of ignoble people, which is the point of the criticism passed on Callippides and in the present day on others, that their women are not like gentlewomen; (3) that tragedy may produce its effect even without movement or action in just the same way as epic poetry, for from the mere reading of a play its quality may be seen, so that, if it be superior in

all other respects, this element of inferiority is no necessary part of it.

In the second place, one must remember (1) that tragedy has everything that the epic has (even the epic metre being admissible), together with a not inconsiderable addition in the shape of the music (a very real factor in the pleasure of the drama) and the spectacle; (2) that its reality of presentation is felt in the play as read, as well as in the play as acted; (3) that the tragic imitation requires less space for the attainment of its end, which is a great advantage, since the more concentrated effect is more pleasurable than one with a large admixture of time to dilute it (consider the *Oedipus* of Sophocles, for instance, and the effect of expanding it into the number of lines of the *Iliad*); (4) that there is less unity in the imitation of the epic poets, as is proved by the fact that any one work of theirs supplies matter for several tragedies, the result being that, if they take what is really a single story, it seems curt when briefly told, and thin and waterish when on the scale of length usual with their verse. In saying that there is less unity in an epic I mean an epic made up of a plurality of actions, in the same way as the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* have many such parts, each one of them in itself of some magnitude; yet the structure of the two Homeric poems is as perfect as can be, and the action in them is as nearly as possible one action. If, then, tragedy is superior in these respects, and also besides these, in its poetic effect (since the two forms of poetry should give us,

not any or every pleasure, but the very special kind we have mentioned), it is clear that, as attaining the poetic effect better than the epic, it will be the higher form of art.

So much for tragedy and epic poetry, for these two arts in general and their species, the number and nature of their constituent parts, the causes of success and failure in them, the objections of the critics, and the solutions in answer to them. . . .

LONGINUS ON THE SUBLIME

Longinus on the Sublime

I

You will remember, my dear Postumius Terentianus, that when we examined together the treatise of Caecilius on the Sublime, we found that it fell below the dignity of the whole subject, while it failed signally to grasp the essential points, and conveyed to its readers but little of that practical help which it should be a writer's principal aim to give. In every systematic treatise two things are required. The first is a statement of the subject; the other, which although second in order ranks higher in importance, is an indication of the methods by which we may attain our end. Now Caecilius seeks to show the nature of the sublime by countless instances as though our ignorance demanded it, but the consideration of the means whereby we may succeed in raising our own capacities to a certain pitch of elevation he has, strangely enough, omitted as unnecessary. 2. However, it may be that the man ought not so much to be blamed for his shortcomings as praised for his happy thought and his enthusiasm. But since you have urged me, in my turn, to write a brief essay on the sublime for your special gratification, let us consider whether the views I have formed contain anything which will be of use to

public men. You will yourself, my friend, in accordance with your nature and with what is fitting, join me in appraising each detail with the utmost regard for truth; for he answered well who, when asked in what qualities we resemble the gods, declared that we do so in benevolence and truth. 3. As I am writing to you, my good friend, who are well versed in literary studies, I feel almost absolved from the necessity of premising at any length that sublimity is a certain distinction and excellence in expression, and that it is from no other source than this that the greatest poets and writers have derived their eminence and gained an immortality of renown. 4. The effect of elevated language upon an audience is not persuasion, but transport. At every time and in every way imposing speech, with the spell it throws over us, prevails over that which aims at persuasion and gratification. Our persuasions we can usually control; but the influences of the sublime bring power and irresistible might to bear, and reign supreme over every hearer. Similarly we see skill in invention, and due order and arrangement of matter, emerging as the hard-won result not of one thing nor of two, but of the whole texture of the composition, whereas Sublimity flashing forth at the right moment scatters everything before it like a thunderbolt, and at once displays the power of the orator in all its plenitude. But enough; for these reflexions, and others like them, you can, I know well, my dear Terentianus, yourself suggest from your own experience.

II

First of all, we must raise the question whether there is such a thing as an art of the sublime or lofty. Some hold that those are entirely in error who would bring such matters under the precepts of art. A lofty tone, says one, is innate, and does not come by teaching; nature is the only art that can compass it. Works of nature are, they think, made worse and altogether feebler when wizened by the rules of art. 2. But I maintain that this will be found to be otherwise if it be observed that, while nature as a rule is free and independent in matters of passion and elevation, yet is she wont not to act at random and utterly without system. Further, nature is the original and vital underlying principle in all cases; but system can define limits and fitting seasons, and can also contribute the safest rules for use and practice. Moreover, the expression of the sublime is more exposed to danger when it goes its own way without the guidance of knowledge, when it is suffered to be unstable and unballasted, when it is left at the mercy of mere momentum and ignorant audacity. It is true that it often needs the spur, but it is also true that it often needs the curb. 3. Demosthenes expresses the view, with regard to human life in general, that good fortune is the greatest of blessings, while good counsel, which occupies the second place, is hardly inferior in importance, since its absence contributes inevitably to the ruin of the former. This we may apply to diction, nature occupying

the position of good fortune, art that of good counsel. Most important of all, we must remember that the very fact that there are some elements of expression which are in the hands of nature alone, can be learnt from no other source than art. If, I say, the critic of those who desire to learn were to turn these matters over in his mind, he would no longer, it seems to me, regard the discussion of the subject as superfluous or useless. . . .

III

> Quell they the oven's far-flung splendour-glow!
> Ha, let me but one hearth-abider mark—
> One flame-wreath torrent-like I'll whirl on high;
> I'll burn the roof, to cinders shrivel it!—
> Nay, now my chant is not of noble strain.[1]

Such things are not tragic but pseudo-tragic—'flame-wreaths,' and 'belching to the sky,' and Boreas represented as a 'flute-player,' and all the rest of it. They are turbid in expression and confused in imagery rather than the product of intensity, and each one of them, if examined in the light of day, sinks little by little from the terrible into the contemptible. But since even in tragedy, which is in its very nature stately and prone to bombast, tasteless tumidity is unpardonable, still less, I presume, will it harmonise with the narration of fact. 2. And this is the ground on which the phrases of Gorgias of Leontini are ridiculed when he describes Xerxes as the 'Zeus of the Persians' and vultures as 'living tombs.' So is

[1] *Aeschylus*, translated by A. S. Way.

it with some of the expressions of Callisthenes which are not sublime, but high-flown, and still more with those of Cleitarchus, for the man is frivolous and blows, as Sophocles has it,

> On pigmy hautboys: mouthpiece have they none.[1]

Other examples will be found in Amphicrates and Hegesias and Matris; for often when these writers seem to themselves to be inspired, they are in no true frenzy, but are simply trifling. 3. Altogether, tumidity seems particularly hard to avoid. The explanation is that all who aim at elevation are so anxious to escape the reproach of being weak and dry that they are carried, as by some strange law of nature, into the opposite extreme. They put their trust in the maxim that 'failure in a great attempt is at least a noble error.' 4. But evil are the swellings, both in the body and in diction, which are inflated and unreal, and threaten us with the reverse of our aim; for nothing, say they, is drier than a man who has the dropsy. While tumidity desires to transcend the limits of the sublime, the defect which is termed puerility is the direct antithesis of elevation, for it is utterly low and mean and in real truth the most ignoble vice of style. What, then, is this puerility? Clearly, a pedant's thoughts, which begin in learned trifling and end in frigidity. Men slip into this kind of error because, while they aim at the uncommon and elaborate and most of all at the attractive, they drift unawares into the tawdry and affected. 5. A

[1] Translated by A. S. Way.

third, and closely allied, kind of defect in matters of passion is that which Theodorus used to call *parenthyrsus*. By this is meant unseasonable and empty passion, where no passion is required, or immoderate, where moderation is needed. For men are often carried away, as if by intoxication, into displays of emotion which are not caused by the nature of the subject, but are purely personal and wearisome. In consequence they seem to hearers who are in no wise affected to act in an ungainly way. And no wonder; for they are beside themselves, while their hearers are not. But the question of the passions we reserve for separate treatment.

IV

Of the second fault of which we have spoken, frigidity, Timaeus supplies many examples. Timaeus was a writer of considerable general ability, who occasionally showed that he was not incapable of elevation of style. He was learned and ingenious, but very prone to criticize the faults of others while blind to his own. Through his passion for continually starting novel notions, he often fell into the merest childishness. 2. I will set down one or two examples only of his manner, since the greater number have been already appropriated by Caecilius. In the course of a eulogy on Alexander the Great, he describes him as 'the man who gained possession of the whole of Asia in fewer years than it took Isocrates to write his *Panegyric* urging war against the Persians.' Strange indeed is the comparison of

the man of Macedon with the rhetorician. How plain it is, Timaeus, that the Lacedaemonians, thus judged, were far inferior to Isocrates in prowess, for they spent thirty years in the conquest of Messene, whereas he composed his *Panegyric* in ten. 3. Consider again the way in which he speaks of the Athenians who were captured in Sicily. 'They were punished because they had acted impiously towards Hermes and mutilated his images, and the infliction of punishment was chiefly due to Hermocrates the son of Hermon, who was descended, in the paternal line, from the outraged god.' I am surprised, beloved Terentianus, that he does not write with regard to the despot Dionysius that 'Dion and Heracleides deprived him of his sovereignty because he had acted impiously towards Zeus and Heracles.' 4. But why speak of Timaeus when even those heroes of literature, Xenophon and Plato, though trained in the school of Socrates, nevertheless sometimes forget themselves for the sake of such paltry pleasantries? Xenophon writes in the *Polity of the Lacedaemonians:* 'You would find it harder to hear their voice than that of busts of marble, harder to deflect their gaze than that of statues of bronze; you would deem them more modest than the very maidens in their eyes.'

It was worthy of an Amphicrates and not of a Xenophon to call the pupils of our eyes 'modest maidens.' Good heavens, how strange it is that the pupils of the whole company should be believed to be modest notwithstanding the common saying that

the shamelessness of individuals is indicated by nothing so much as the eyes! 'Thou sot, that hast the eyes of a dog,' as Homer has it. 5. Timaeus, however, has not left even this piece of frigidity to Xenophon, but clutches it as though it were hid treasure. At all events, after saying of Agathocles that he abducted his cousin, who had been given in marriage to another man, from the midst of the nuptial rites, he asks, 'Who could have done this had he not had wantons, in place of maidens, in his eyes?' 6. Yes, and Plato (usually so divine) when he means simply *tablets* says, 'They shall write and preserve *cypress memorials* in the temples.'

And again, 'As touching walls, Megillus, I should hold with Sparta that they be suffered to lie asleep in the earth and not summoned to arise.' 7. The expression of Herodotus to the effect that beautiful women are 'eye-smarts' is not much better. This, however, may be condoned in some degree since those who use this particular phrase in his narrative are barbarians and in their cups; but not even in the mouths of such characters is it well that an author should suffer, in the judgment of posterity, from an unseemly exhibition of triviality.

V

All these ugly and parasitical growths arise in literature from a single cause, that pursuit of novelty in the expression of ideas which may be regarded as the fashionable craze of the day. Our defects usually spring, for the most part, from the same sources as

our good points. Hence, while beauties of expression and touches of sublimity, and charming elegances withal, are favourable to effective composition, yet these very things are the elements and foundation, not only of success, but also of the contrary. Something of the kind is true also of variations and hyperboles and the use of the plural number, and we shall show subsequently the dangers to which these seem severally to be exposed. It is necessary now to seek and to suggest means by which we may avoid the defects which attend the steps of the sublime.

VI

The best means would be, my friend, to gain, first of all, clear knowledge and appreciation of the true sublime. The enterprise is, however, an arduous one. For the judgment of style is the last and crowning fruit of long experience. None the less, if I must speak in the way of precept, it is not impossible perhaps to acquire discrimination in these matters by attention to some such hints as those which follow.

VII

You must know, my dear friend, that it is with the sublime as in the common life of man. In life nothing can be considered great which it is held great to despise. For instance, riches, honours, distinctions, sovereignties, and all other things which possess in abundance the external trappings of the stage, will not seem, to a man of sense, to be supreme blessings, since the very contempt of them is reckoned

good in no small degree, and in any case those who could have them, but are high-souled enough to disdain them, are more admired than those who have them. So also in the case of sublimity in poems and prose writings, we must consider whether some supposed examples have not simply the appearance of elevation with many idle accretions, so that when analysed they are found to be mere vanity, objects which a noble nature will rather despise than admire. 2. For, as if instinctively, our soul is uplifted by the true sublime; it takes a proud flight, and is filled with joy and vaunting, as though it had itself produced what it has heard. 3. When, therefore, a thing is heard repeatedly by a man of intelligence who is well versed in literature, and its effect is not to dispose the soul to high thoughts, and it does not leave in the mind more food for reflexion than the words seem to convey, but falls, if examined carefully through and through, into disesteem, it cannot rank as true sublimity because it does not survive a first hearing. For that is really great which bears a repeated examination, and which it is difficult or rather impossible to withstand, and the memory of which is strong and hard to efface. 4. In general, consider those examples of sublimity to be fine and genuine which please all and always. For when men of different pursuits, lives, ambitions, ages, languages, hold identical views on one and the same subject, then that verdict which results, so to speak, from a concert of discordant elements makes our faith in the object of admiration strong and unassailable.

VIII

There are, it may be said, five principal sources of elevated language. Beneath these five varieties there lies, as though it were a common foundation, the gift of discourse, which is indispensable. First and most important is the power of forming great conceptions, as we have elsewhere explained in our remarks on Xenophon. Secondly, there is vehement and inspired passion. These two components of the sublime are for the most part innate. Those which remain are partly the product of art. The due formation of figures deals with two sorts of figures, first those of thought and secondly those of expression. Next there is noble diction, which in turn comprises choice of words, and use of metaphors, and elaboration of language. The fifth cause of elevation, one which is the fitting conclusion of all that have preceded it, is dignified and elevated composition. Come now, let us consider what is involved in each of these varieties, with this one remark by way of preface, that Caecilius has omitted some of the five divisions, for example, that of passion. 2. Surely he is quite mistaken if he does so on the ground that these two, sublimity and passion, are a unity, and if it seems to him that they are by nature one and inseparable. For some passions are found which are far removed from sublimity and are of a low order, such as pity, grief, and fear; and on the other hand there are many examples of the sublime which are independent of passion, such as the daring words of

Homer with regard to the Aloadae, to take one out of numberless instances,

Yea, Ossa in fury they strove to upheave on Olympus on high,
With forest-clad Pelion above, that thence they might step to the sky.

And so of the words which follow with still greater force:—

Ay, and the deed had they done.

3. Among the orators, too, eulogies and ceremonial and occasional addresses contain on every side examples of dignity and elevation, but are for the most part void of passion. This is the reason why passionate speakers are the worst eulogists, and why, on the other hand, those who are apt in encomium are the least passionate. 4. If, on the other hand, Caecilius thought that passion never contributes at all to sublimity, and if it was for this reason that he did not deem it worthy of mention, he is altogether deluded. I would affirm with confidence that there is no tone so lofty as that of genuine passion, in its right place, when it bursts out in a wild gust of mad enthusiasm and as it were fills the speaker's words with frenzy.

IX

Now the first of the conditions mentioned, namely elevation of mind, holds the foremost rank among them all. We must, therefore, in this case also, although we have to do rather with an endowment than with an acquirement, nurture our souls, as far as that is possible, to thoughts sublime, and make

them always pregnant, so to say, with noble inspiration. 2. In what way, you may ask, is this to be done? Elsewhere I have written as follows: 'Sublimity is the echo of a great soul.' Hence also a bare idea, by itself and without a spoken word, sometimes excites admiration just because of the greatness of soul implied. Thus the silence of Ajax in the Underworld is great and more sublime than words.[1] 3. First, then, it is absolutely necessary to indicate the source of this elevation, namely that the truly eloquent must be free from low and ignoble thoughts. For it is not possible that men with mean and servile ideas and aims prevailing throughout their lives should produce anything that is admirable and worthy of immortality. Great accents we expect to fall from the lips of those whose thoughts are deep and grave. 4. Thus it is that stately speech comes naturally to the proudest spirits. [You will remember the answer of] Alexander to Parmenio when he said 'For my part I had been well content' . . . the distance from earth to heaven; and this might well be considered the measure of Homer no less than of Strife. 5. How unlike to this the expression which is used of Sorrow by Hesiod, if indeed the *Shield* is to be attributed to Hesiod:

Rheum from her nostrils was trickling.

The image he has suggested is not terrible, but rather loathsome. Contrast the way in which Homer magnifies the higher powers:

[1] *Odyss.* xi. 543.

And far as a man with his eyes through the sea-line haze may
discern,
On a cliff as he sitteth and gazeth away o'er the wine-dark deep,
So far at a bound do the loud-neighing steeds of the Deathless
leap.

He makes the vastness of the world the measure of their leap. The sublimity is so overpowering as naturally to prompt the exclamation that if the divine steeds were to leap thus twice in succession they would pass beyond the confines of the world. 6. How transcendent also are the images in the Battle of the Gods:—

Far round wide heaven and Olympus echoed his clarion of thunder;
And Hades, king of the realm of shadows, quaked thereunder.
And he sprang from his throne, and he cried aloud in the dread
of his heart
Lest o'er him earth-shaker Poseidon should cleave the ground
apart,
And revealed to immortals and mortals should stand those awful
abodes,
Those mansions ghastly and grim, abhorred of the very Gods.

You see, my friend, how the earth is torn from its foundations, Tartarus itself is laid bare, the whole world is upturned and parted asunder, and all things together—heaven and hell, things mortal and things immortal—share in the conflict and the perils of that battle!

7. But although these things are awe-inspiring, yet from another point of view, if they be not taken allegorically, they are altogether impious, and violate our sense of what is fitting. Homer seems to me, in his legends of wounds suffered by the gods, and of

their feuds, reprisals, tears, bonds, and all their manifold passions, to have made, as far as lay within his power, gods of the men concerned in the Siege of Troy, and men of the gods. But whereas we mortals have death as the destined haven of our ills if our lot is miserable, he portrays the gods as immortal not only in nature but also in misfortune. 8. Much superior to the passages respecting the Battle of the Gods are those which represent the divine nature as it really is, pure and great and undefiled; for example, what is said of Poseidon in a passage fully treated by many before ourselves:

Her far-stretching ridges, her forest-trees, quaked in dismay,
And her peaks, and the Trojans' town, and the ships of Achaia's array,
Beneath his immortal feet, as onward Poseidon strode.
Then over the surges he drave: leapt sporting before the God
Sea-beasts that uprose all round from the depths, for their king they knew,
And for rapture the sea was disparted, and onward the car-steeds flew.

9. Similarly, the legislator of the Jews, no ordinary man, having formed and expressed a worthy conception of the might of the Godhead, writes at the very beginning of his Laws, 'God said'—what? 'Let there be light, and there was light; let there be land, and there was land.' 10. Perhaps I shall not seem tedious, my friend, if I bring forward one passage more from Homer, this time with regard to the concerns of *men*, in order to show that he is wont himself to enter into the sublime actions of his heroes.

In his poem the battle of the Greeks is suddenly veiled by mist and baffling night. Then Ajax, at his wits' end, cries:

Zeus, Father, yet save thou Achaia's sons from beneath the gloom,
And make clear day, and vouchsafe unto us with our eyes to see!
So it be but in light, destroy us!

That is the true attitude of an Ajax. He does not pray for life, for such a petition would have ill beseemed a hero. But since in the hopeless darkness he can turn his valour to no noble end, he chafes at his slackness in the fray and craves the boon of immediate light, resolved to find a death worthy of his bravery, even though Zeus should fight in the ranks against him. 11. In truth, Homer in these cases shares the full inspiration of the combat, and it is neither more nor less than true of the poet himself that

Mad rageth he as Arês the shaker of spears, or as mad flames leap
Wild-wasting from hill unto hill in the folds of a forest deep,
And the foam-froth fringeth his lips.

He shows, however, in the *Odyssey* (and this further observation deserves attention on many grounds) that, when a great genius is declining, the special token of old age is the love of marvellous tales. 12. It is clear from many indications that the *Odyssey* was his second subject. A special proof is the fact that he introduces in that poem remnants of the adventures before Ilium as episodes, so to say, of the Trojan War. And indeed, he there renders a tribute

of mourning and lamentation to his heroes as though he were carrying out a long-cherished purpose. In fact, the *Odyssey* is simply an epilogue to the *Iliad:*—

There lieth Ajax the warrior wight, Achilles is there,
There is Patroclus, whose words had weight as a God he were;
There lieth mine own dear son.

13. It is for the same reason, I suppose, that he has made the whole structure of the *Iliad*, which was written at the height of his inspiration, full of action and conflict, while the *Odyssey* for the most part consists of narrative, as is characteristic of old age. Accordingly, in the *Odyssey* Homer may be likened to a sinking sun, whose grandeur remains without its intensity. He does not in the *Odyssey* maintain so high a pitch as in those poems of Ilium. His sublimities are not evenly sustained and free from the liability to sink; there is not the same profusion of accumulated passions, nor the supple and oratorical style, packed with images drawn from real life. You seem to see henceforth the ebb and flow of greatness, and a fancy roving in the fabulous and incredible, as though the ocean were withdrawing into itself and were being laid bare within its own confines. 14. In saying this I have not forgotten the tempests in the *Odyssey* and the story of the Cyclops and the like. If I speak of old age, it is nevertheless the old age of Homer. The fabulous element, however, prevails throughout this poem over the real. The object of this digression has been, as I said, to show how easily great natures in their

decline are sometimes diverted into absurdity, as in the incident of the wine-skin and of the men who were fed like swine by Circe (*whining porkers*, as Zoilus called them), and of Zeus like a nestling nurtured by the doves, and of the hero who was without food for ten days upon the wreck, and of the incredible tale of the slaying of the suitors. For what else can we term these things than veritable dreams of Zeus? 15. These observations with regard to the *Odyssey* should be made for another reason—in order that you may know that the genius of great poets and prose-writers, as their passion declines, finds its final expression in the delineation of character. For such are the details which Homer gives, with an eye to characterisation, of life in the home of Odysseus; they form as it were a comedy of manners.

X

Let us next consider whether we can point to anything further that contributes to sublimity of style. Now, there inhere in all things by nature certain constituents which are part and parcel of their substance. It must needs be, therefore, that we shall find one source of the sublime in the systematic selection of the most important elements, and the power of forming, by their mutual combination, what may be called one body. The former process attracts the hearer by the choice of the ideas, the latter by the aggregation of those chosen. For instance, Sappho everywhere chooses the emotions that attend delirious passion from its accompani-

ments in actual life. Wherein does she demonstrate her supreme excellence? In the skill with which she selects and binds together the most striking and vehement circumstances of passion:—

2. Peer of God she seemeth to me, the blissful
Man who sits and gazes at thee before him,
Close beside thee sits, and in silence hears thee
Silverly speaking,

Laughing love's low laughter. Oh this, this only
Stirs the troubled heart in my breast to tremble!
For should I but see thee a little moment,
Straight is my voice hushed;

Yea, my tongue is broken, and through and through me
'Neath the flesh impalpable fire runs tingling;
Nothing see mine eyes, and a noise of roaring
Waves in my ear sounds;

Sweat runs down in rivers, a tremor seizes
All my limbs, and paler than grass in autumn,
Caught by pains of menacing death, I falter,
Lost in the love-trance.

3. Are you not amazed how at one instant she summons, as though they were all alien from herself and dispersed, soul, body, ears, tongue, eyes, colour? Uniting contradictions, she is, at one and the same time, hot and cold, in her senses and out of her mind; for she is either terrified or at the point of death. The effect desired is that not one passion only should be seen in her, but a concourse of the passions. All such things occur in the case of lovers; but it is, as I said, the selection of the most striking of them

and their combination into a single whole that has produced the singular excellence of the passage. In the same way Homer, when describing tempests, picks out the most appalling circumstances. 4. The author of the *Arimaspeia* thinks to inspire awe in the following way:—

A marvel exceeding great is this withal to my soul—
Men dwell on the water afar from the land, where deep seas roll.
Wretches are they, for they reap but a harvest of travail and pain,
Their eyes on the stars ever dwell, while their hearts abide in the main.
Often, I ween, to the Gods are their hands upraised on high,
And with hearts in misery heavenward-lifted in prayer do they cry.

It is clear, I imagine, to everybody that there is more elegance than terror in these words. 5. But what says Homer? Let one instance be quoted from among many:—

And he burst on them like as a wave swift-rushing beneath black clouds,
Heaved huge by the winds, bursts down on a ship, and the wild foam shrouds
From the stem to the stern her hull, and the storm-blast's terrible breath
Roars in the sail, and the heart of the shipmen shuddereth
In fear, for that scantly upborne are they now from the clutches of death.

6. Aratus has attempted to convert this same expression to his own use:—

And a slender plank averteth their death.

Only, he has made it trivial and neat instead of terrible. Furthermore, he has put bounds to the danger

by saying *A plank keeps off death.* After all, it *does* keep it off. Homer, however, does not for one moment set a limit to the terror of the scene, but draws a vivid picture of men continually in peril of their lives, and often within an ace of perishing with each successive wave. Moreover, he has in the words *ὑπὲκ θανάτοιο*, forced into union, by a kind of unnatural compulsion, prepositions not usually compounded. He has thus tortured his line into the similitude of the impending calamity, and by the constriction of the verse has excellently figured the disaster, and almost stamped upon the expression the very form and pressure of the danger, *ὑπὲκ θανάτοιο φέρονται.* 7. This is true also of Archilochus in his account of the shipwreck, and of Demosthenes in the passage which begins 'It was evening,' where he describes the bringing of the news. The salient points they selected, one might say, according to merit and massed them together, inserting in the midst nothing frivolous, mean, or trivial. For these faults mar the effect of the whole, just as though they introduced chinks or fissures into stately and co-ordered edifices, whose walls are compacted by their reciprocal adjustment.

XI

An allied excellence to those already set forth is that which is termed *amplification.* This figure is employed when the narrative or the course of a forensic argument admits, from section to section, of many starting-points and many pauses, and elevated

expressions follow, one after the other, in an unbroken succession and in an ascending order. 2. And this may be effected either by way of the rhetorical treatment of commonplaces, or by way of intensification (whether events or arguments are to be strongly presented), or by the orderly arrangement of facts or of passions; indeed, there are innumerable kinds of amplification. Only, the orator must in every case remember that none of these methods by itself, apart from sublimity, forms a complete whole, unless indeed where pity is to be excited or an opponent to be disparaged. In all other cases of amplification, if you take away the sublime, you will remove as it were the soul from the body. For the vigour of the amplification at once loses its intensity and its substance when not resting on a firm basis of the sublime. 3. Clearness, however, demands that we should define concisely how our present precepts differ from the point under consideration a moment ago, namely the marking-out of the most striking conceptions and the unification of them; and wherein, generally, the sublime differs from amplification.

XII

Now the definition given by the writers on rhetoric does not satisfy me. Amplification is, say they, discourse which invests the subject with grandeur. This definition, however, would surely apply in equal measure to sublimity and passion and figurative language, since they too invest the discourse with a certain degree of grandeur. The point of distinction

between them seems to me to be that sublimity consists in elevation, while amplification embraces a multitude of details. Consequently, sublimity is often comprised in a single thought, while amplification is universally associated with a certain magnitude and abundance. 2. Amplification (to sum the matter up in a general way) is an aggregation of all the constituent parts and topics of a subject, lending strength to the argument by dwelling upon it, and differing herein from proof that, while the latter demonstrates the matter under investigation. . . .

With his vast riches Plato swells, like some sea, into a greatness which expands on every side. 3. Wherefore it is, I suppose, that the orator in his utterance shows, as one who appeals more to the passions, all the glow of a fiery spirit. Plato, on the other hand, firm-planted in his pride and magnificent stateliness, cannot indeed be accused of coldness, but he has not the same vehemence. 4. And it is in these same respects, my dear friend Terentianus, that it seems to me (supposing always that we Greeks are allowed to have an opinion upon the point) that Cicero differs from Demosthenes in elevated passages. For the latter is characterised by sublimity which is for the most part rugged, Cicero by profusion. Our orator, owing to the fact that in his vehemence,—aye, and in his speed, power, and intensity,—he can as it were consume by fire and carry away all before him, may be compared to a thunderbolt or flash of lightning. Cicero, on the other hand, it seems to me, after the manner of a wide-spread conflagration, rolls

on with all-devouring flames, having within him an ample and abiding store of fire, distributed now at this point now at that, and fed by an unceasing succession. 5. This, however, you will be better able to decide; but the great opportunity of Demosthenes' high-pitched elevation comes where intense utterance and vehement passion are in question, and in passages in which the audience is to be utterly enthralled. The profusion of Cicero is in place where the hearer must be flooded with words; for it is appropriate to the treatment of commonplaces, and to perorations for the most part and digressions, and to all descriptive and declamatory passages, and to writings on history and natural science, and to many other departments of literature.

XIII

To return from my digression. Although Plato thus flows on with noiseless stream, he is none the less elevated. You know this because you have read the *Republic* and are familiar with his manner. 'Those,' says he, 'who are destitute of wisdom and goodness and are ever present at carousals and the like are carried on the downward path, it seems, and wander thus throughout their life. They never look upwards to the truth, nor do they lift their heads, nor enjoy any pure and lasting pleasure; but like cattle they have their eyes ever cast downwards and bent upon the ground and upon their feeding-places, and they graze and grow fat and breed, and through their insatiate desire of these delights they kick and

butt with horns and hoofs of iron and kill one another in their greed.'

2. This writer shows us, if only we were willing to pay him heed, that another way, beyond anything we have mentioned, leads to the sublime. And what, and what manner of way, may that be? It is the imitation and emulation of previous great poets and writers. And let this, my dear friend, be an aim to which we steadfastly apply ourselves. For many men are carried away by the spirit of others as if inspired, just as it is related of the Pythian priestess when she approaches the tripod, where there is a rift in the ground which, they say, exhales divine vapour. By heavenly power thus communicated she is impregnated and straightway delivers oracles in virtue of the afflatus. Similarly from the great natures of the men of old there are borne in upon the souls of those who emulate them, as from sacred caves, what we may describe as *effluences*, so that even those who seem little likely to be possessed are thereby inspired and succumb to the spell of the others' greatness. 3. Was Herodotus alone a devoted imitator of Homer? No, Stesichorus even before his time, and Archilochus, and above all Plato, who from the great Homeric source drew to himself innumerable tributary streams. And perhaps we should have found it necessary to prove this, point by point, had not Ammonius and his followers selected and recorded the particulars. 4. This proceeding is not plagiarism; it is like taking an impression from beautiful forms or figures or other

works of art. And it seems to me that there would not have been so fine a bloom of perfection on Plato's philosophical doctrines, and that he would not in many cases have found his way to poetical subject-matter and modes of expression, unless he had with all his heart and mind struggled with Homer for the primacy, entering the lists like a young champion matched against the man whom all admire, and showing perhaps too much love of contention and breaking a lance with him as it were, but deriving some profit from the contest none the less. For, as Hesiod says, 'This strife is good for mortals.' And in truth that struggle for the crown of glory is noble and best deserves the victory in which even to be worsted by one's predecessors brings no discredit.

XIV

Accordingly it is well that we ourselves also, when elaborating anything which requires lofty expression and elevated conception, should shape some idea in our minds as to how perchance Homer would have said this very thing, or how it would have been raised to the sublime by Plato or Demosthenes or by the historian Thucydides. For those personages, presenting themselves to us and inflaming our ardour and as it were illumining our path, will carry our minds in a mysterious way to the high standards of sublimity which are imaged within us. 2. Still more effectual will it be to suggest this question to our thoughts, 'What sort of hearing would Homer, had he been present, or Demosthenes have given to this

or that when said by me, or how would they have been affected by the other?' For the ordeal is indeed a severe one, if we presuppose such a tribunal and theatre for our own utterances, and imagine that we are undergoing a scrutiny of our writings before these great heroes, acting as judges and witnesses. 3. A greater incentive still will be supplied if you add the question, 'In what spirit will each succeeding age listen to me who have written thus?' But if one shrinks from the very thought of uttering aught that may transcend the term of his own life and time, the conceptions of his mind must necessarily be incomplete, blind, and as it were untimely born, since they are by no means brought to the perfection needed to ensure a futurity of fame.

XV

Images, moreover, contribute greatly, my young friend, to dignity, elevation, and power as a pleader. In this sense some call them mental representations. In a general way the name of *image* or *imagination* is applied to every idea of the mind, in whatever form it presents itself, which gives birth to speech. But at the present day the word is predominantly used in cases where, carried away by enthusiasm and passion, you think you see what you describe, and you place it before the eyes of your hearers. 2. Further, you will be aware of the fact that an image has one purpose with the orators and another with the poets, and that the design of the poetical image is enthralment; of the rhetorical, vivid de-

scription. Both, however, seek to stir the passions and the emotions.

> Mother!—'beseech thee, hark not thou on me
> Yon maidens gory-eyed and snaky-haired!
> Lo there!—lo there!—they are nigh—they leap on me!

And:

> Ah! she will slay me! whither can I fly?

In these scenes the poet himself saw Furies, and the image in his mind he almost compelled his audience also to behold. 3. Now Euripides is most assiduous in giving the utmost tragic effect to these two emotions, fits of love and madness. Herein he succeeds more, perhaps, than in any other respect, although he is daring enough to invade all the other regions of the imagination. Notwithstanding that he is by nature anything but elevated, he forces his own genius in many passages to tragic heights; and everywhere in the matter of sublimity it is true of him, to adopt Homer's words, that

> The tail of him scourgeth his ribs and his flanks to left and to right,
> And he lasheth himself into frenzy, and spurreth him on to the fight.

4. When the Sun hands the reins to Phaethon, he says

> 'Thou, driving, trespass not on Libya's sky,
> Whose heat, by dews untempered, else shall split
> Thy car asunder.'

And after that,

> 'Speed onward toward the Pleiads seven thy course.'
> Thus far the boy heard; then he snatched the reins:
> He lashed the flanks of that wing-wafted team;

Loosed rein; and they through folds of cloudland soared.
Hard after on a fiery star his sire
Rode, counselling his son—'Ho! thither drive!
Hither thy car turn—hither!'

Would you not say that the soul of the writer enters the chariot at the same moment as Phaethon and shares in his dangers and in the rapid flight of his steeds? For it could never have conceived such a picture had it not been borne in no less swift career on that journey through the heavens. The same is true of the words which Euripides attributes to his Cassandra:—

O chariot-loving Trojans.

5. Aeschylus, too, ventures on images of a most heroic stamp. An example will be found in his *Seven against Thebes*, where he says

For seven heroes, squadron-captains fierce,
Over a black-rimmed shield have slain a bull,
And, dipping in the bull's blood each his hand,
By Ares and Enyo, and by Panic
Lover of blood, have sworn.

In mutual fealty they devoted themselves by that joint oath to a relentless doom. Sometimes, however, he introduces ideas that are rough-hewn and uncouth and harsh; and Euripides, when stirred by the spirit of emulation, comes perilously near the same fault, even in spite of his own natural bent. 6. Thus in Aeschylus the palace of Lycurgus at the coming of Dionysus is strangely represented as *possessed:*—

A frenzy thrills the hall; the roofs are bacchant
With ecstasy:

an idea which Euripides has echoed, in other words, it is true, and with some abatement of its crudity, where he says:—

> The whole mount shared their bacchic ecstasy.

7. Magnificent are the images which Sophocles has conceived of the death of Oedipus, who makes ready his burial amid the portents of the sky. Magnificent, too, is the passage where the Greeks are on the point of sailing away, and Achilles appears above his tomb to those who are putting out to sea—a scene which I doubt whether anyone has depicted more vividly than Simonides. But it is impossible to cite all the examples that present themselves. 8. It is no doubt true that those which are found in the poets contain, as I said, a tendency to exaggeration in the way of the fabulous and that they transcend in every way the credible; but in oratorical imagery the best feature is always its reality and truth. Whenever the form of a speech is poetical and fabulous and breaks into every kind of impossibility, such digressions have a strange and alien air. For example, the clever orators forsooth of our day, like the tragedians, see Furies, and—fine fellows that they are—cannot even understand that Orestes when he cries

> Unhand me!—of mine Haunting Fiends thou art—
> Dost grip my waist to hurl me into hell![1]

has these fancies because he is mad. 9. What, then, can oratorical imagery effect? Well, it is able in

[1] Eurip. *Orest.* 264.

many ways to infuse vehemence and passion into spoken words, while more particularly when it is combined with the argumentative passages it not only persuades the hearer but actually makes him its slave. Here is an example. 'Why, if at this very moment,' says Demosthenes, 'a loud cry were to be heard in front of the courts, and we were told that the prison-house lies open and the prisoners are in full flight, no one, whether he be old or young, is so heedless as not to lend aid to the utmost of his power; aye, and if any one came forward and said that yonder stands the man who let them go, the offender would be promptly put to death without a hearing.' 10. In the same way, too, Hyperides on being accused, after he had proposed the liberation of the slaves subsequently to the great defeat, said 'This proposal was framed, not by the orator, but by the battle of Chaeroneia.' The speaker has here at one and the same time followed a train of reasoning and indulged a flight of imagination. He has, therefore, passed the bounds of mere persuasion by the boldness of his conception. 11. By a sort of natural law in all such matters we always attend to whatever possesses superior force; whence it is that we are drawn away from demonstration pure and simple to any startling image within whose dazzling brilliancy the argument lies concealed. And it is not unreasonable that we should be affected in this way, for when two things are brought together, the more powerful always attracts to itself the virtue of the weaker. 12. It will be enough to have said thus much with regard

to examples of the sublime in thought, when produced by greatness of soul, imitation, or imagery.

XVI

Here, however, in due order comes the place assigned to figures; for they, if handled in the proper manner, will contribute, as I have said, in no mean degree to sublimity. But since to treat thoroughly of them all at the present moment would be a great, or rather an endless task, we will now, with the object of proving our proposition, run over a few only of those which produce elevation of diction. 2. Demosthenes is bringing forward a reasoned vindication of his public policy. What was the natural way of treating the subject? It was this. 'You were not wrong, you who engaged in the struggle for the freedom of Greece. You have domestic warrant for it. For the warriors of Marathon did no wrong, nor they of Salamis, nor they of Plataea.' When, however, as though suddenly inspired by heaven and as it were frenzied by the God of Prophecy, he utters his famous oath by the champions of Greece ('assuredly ye did no wrong; I swear it by those who at Marathon stood in the forefront of the danger'), in the public view by this one figure of adjuration, which I here term *apostrophe*, he deifies his ancestors. He brings home the thought that we ought to swear by those who have thus nobly died as we swear by gods, and he fills the mind of the judges with the high spirit of those who there bore the brunt of the danger, and he has transformed the

natural course of the argument into transcendent sublimity and passion and that secure belief which rests upon strange and prodigious oaths. He instils into the minds of his hearers the conviction, which acts as a medicine and an antidote, that they should, uplifted by these eulogies, feel no less proud of the fight against Philip than of the triumph at Marathon and Salamis. By all these means he carries his hearers clean away with him through the employment of a single figure. 3. It is said, indeed, that the germ of the oath is found in Eupolis:—

> For, by the fight I won at Marathon,
> No one shall vex my soul and rue it not.

But it is not sublime to swear by a person in any chance way; the sublimity depends upon the place and the manner and the circumstances and the motive. Now in the passage of Eupolis there is nothing but the mere oath, addressed to the Athenians when still prosperous and in no need of comfort. Furthermore, the poet in his oath has not made divinities of the men in order so to create in his hearers a worthy conception of their valour, but he has wandered away from those who stood in the forefront of the danger to an inanimate thing, the fight. In Demosthenes the oath is framed for vanquished men, with the intention that Chaeroneia should no longer appear a failure to the Athenians. He gives them at one and the same time, as I remarked, a demonstration that they have done no wrong, an example, the sure evidence of oaths, a eulogy, an exhortation.

4. And since the orator was likely to be confronted with the objection, 'You are speaking of the *defeat* which has attended your administration, and yet you swear by *victories*,' in what follows he consequently measures even individual words, and chooses them unerringly, showing that even in the revels of the imagination sobriety is required. 'Those,' he says, 'who stood in the forefront of the danger at Marathon, and those who fought by sea at Salamis and Artemisium, and those who stood in the ranks at Plataea.' Nowhere does he use the word 'conquered,' but at every turn he has evaded any indication of the result, since it was fortunate and the opposite of what happened at Chaeroneia. So he at once rushes forward and carries his hearer off his feet. 'All of whom,' says he, 'were accorded a public burial by the state, Aeschines, and not *the successful only*.'

XVII

I ought not, my dear friend, to omit at this point an observation of my own, which shall be most concisely stated. It is that, by a sort of natural law, figures bring support to the sublime, and on their part derive support in turn from it in a wonderful degree. Where and how, I will explain. The cunning use of figures is peculiarly subject to suspicion, and produces an impression of ambush, plot, fallacy. This is so when the plea is addressed to a judge with absolute powers, and particularly to despots, kings, and leaders in positions of superiority. Such an one

at once feels resentment if, like a foolish boy, he is tricked by the paltry figures of the oratorical craftsman. Construing the fallacy into a personal affront, sometimes he becomes quite wild with rage, or if he controls his anger, steels himself utterly against persuasive words. Wherefore a figure is at its best when the very fact that it is a figure escapes attention. 2. Accordingly, sublimity and passion form an antidote and a wonderful help against the mistrust which attends upon the use of figures. The art which craftily employs them lies hid and escapes all future suspicion, when once it has been associated with beauty and sublimity. A sufficient proof is the passage already adduced, 'By the men of Marathon I swear.' By what means has the orator here concealed the figure? Clearly, by the very excess of light. For just as all dim lights are extinguished in the blaze of the sun, so do the artifices of rhetoric fade from view when bathed in the pervading splendour of sublimity. 3. Something like this happens also in the art of painting. For although light and shade, as depicted in colours, lie side by side upon the same surface, light nevertheless meets the vision first, and not only stands out, but also seems far nearer. So also with the manifestations of passion and the sublime in literature. They lie nearer to our minds through a sort of natural kinship and through their own radiance, and always strike our attention before the figures, whose art they throw into the shade and as it were keep in concealment.

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XVIII

But what are we next to say of questions and interrogations? Is it not precisely by the visualizing qualities of these figures that Demosthenes strives to make his speeches far more effective and impressive? 'Pray tell me,—tell me, you sir,—do you wish to go about and inquire of one another, Is there any news? Why, what greater news could there be than this, that a Macedonian is subduing Greece? Is Philip dead? No; but he is ill. Dead or ill, what difference to you? Should anything happen to him, you will speedily create another Philip.' Again he says, 'Let us sail against Macedonia. Where shall we find a landing-place? someone asks. The war itself will discover the weak places in Philip's position.' All this, if stated plainly and directly, would have been altogether weaker. As it is, the excitement, and the rapid play of question and answer, and the plan of meeting his own objections as though they were urged by another, have by the help of the figure made the language used not only more elevated but also more convincing. 2. For an exhibition of passion has a greater effect when it seems not to be studied by the speaker himself, but to be inspired by the occasion; and questions asked and answered by oneself simulate a natural outburst of passion. For just as those who are interrogated by others experience a sudden excitement and answer the inquiry incisively and with the utmost candour, so the figure of question and answer leads the hearer

to suppose that each deliberate thought is struck out and uttered on the spur of the moment, and thus beguiles his reason. We may further quote that passage of Herodotus which is regarded as one of the most elevated: 'if thus. . . .'

XIX

The words issue forth without connecting links and are poured out as it were, almost outstripping the speaker himself. 'Locking their shields,' says Xenophon, 'they thrust, fought, slew, fell.' 2. And so with the words of Eurylochus:—

We passed, as thou badst, Odysseus, midst twilight of oak-trees round.
There amidst of the forest-glens a beautiful palace we found. [1]

For the lines detached from one another, but none the less hurried along, produce the impression of an agitation which interposes obstacles and at the same time adds impetuosity. This result Homer has produced by the omission of conjunctions.

XX

A powerful effect usually attends the union of figures for a common object, when two or three mingle together as it were in partnership, and contribute a fund of strength, persuasiveness, beauty. Thus, in the speech against Meidias, examples will be found of broken sentences, interwoven with instances of repetition and vivid description. 'For

[1] *Odyss.* x. 251, 2.

the smiter can do many things (some of which the sufferer cannot even describe to another) by attitude, by look, by voice.' 2. Then, in order that the narrative may not, as it advances, continue in the same groove (for continuance betokens tranquillity, while passion—the transport and commotion of the soul—sets order at defiance), straightway he hurries off to other broken sentences and repetitions. 'By attitude, by look, by voice, when he acts with insolence, when he acts like an enemy, when he smites with his fists, when he smites you like a slave.' By these words the orator produces the same effect as the assailant; he strikes the mind of the judges by the swift succession of blow on blow. 3. Starting from this point again, as suddenly as a gust of wind, he makes another attack. 'When smitten with blows of fists,' he says, 'when smitten upon the cheek. These things stir the blood, these drive men beyond themselves, when unused to insult. No one can, in describing them, convey a notion of the indignity they imply.' So he maintains throughout, though with continual variation, the essential character of the repetitions and broken sentences. In this way, with him, order is disorderly, and on the other hand disorder contains a certain element of order.

XXI

Come now, add, if you please, in these cases connecting particles after the fashion of the followers of Isocrates. 'Furthermore, this fact too must not be

overlooked, that the smiter may do many things, first by attitude, then by look, then again by the mere voice.' You will feel, if you transcribe the passage in this orderly fashion, that the rugged impetuosity of passion, once you make it smooth and equable by adding the copulatives, falls pointless and immediately loses all its fire. 2. Just as the binding of the limbs of runners deprives them of their power of rapid motion, so also passion, when shackled by connecting links and other appendages, chafes at the restriction, for it loses the freedom of its advance and its rapid emission as though from an engine of war.

XXII

Inversions must be placed under the same category. They are departures in the order of expressions or ideas from the natural sequence; and they bear, it may be said, the very stamp and impress of vehement emotion. Just as those who are really moved by anger, or fear, or indignation, or jealousy, or any other emotion (for the passions are many and countless, and none can give their number), at times turn aside, and when they have taken one thing as their subject often leap to another, foisting in the midst some irrelevant matter, and then again wheel round to their original theme, and driven by their vehemence, as by a veering wind, now this way now that with rapid changes, transform their expressions, their thoughts, the order suggested by a natural sequence, into numberless variations of every kind; so also

among the best writers it is by means of inversion that imitation approaches the effects of nature. For art is perfect when it seems to be nature, and nature hits the mark when she contains art hidden within her. We may illustrate by the words of Dionysius of Phocaea in Herodotus. 'Our fortunes lie on a razor's edge, men of Ionia; for freedom or for bondage, and that the bondage of runaway slaves. Now, therefore, if you choose to submit to hardships, you will have toil for the moment, but you will be able to overcome your foes.' 2. Here the natural order would have been: 'Men of Ionia, now is the time for you to meet hardships; for our fortunes lie on a razor's edge.' But the speaker postpones the words 'Men of Ionia.' He starts at once with the danger of the situation, as though in such imminent peril he had no time at all to address his hearers. Moreover, he inverts the order of ideas. For instead of saying that they ought to endure hardships, which is the real object of his exhortation, he first assigns the reason because of which they ought to endure hardships, in the words 'our fortunes lie on a razor's edge.' The result is that what he says seems not to be premeditated, but to be prompted by the necessities of the moment. 3. In a still higher degree Thucydides is most bold and skilful in disjoining from one another by means of transpositions things that are by nature intimately united and indivisible. Demosthenes is not so masterful as Thucydides; but of all writers he most abounds in this kind of figure, and through his use of it makes a great im-

pression of vehemence, yes and of unpremeditated speech, and moreover draws his hearers with him into all the perils of his long inversions. 4. For he will often leave in suspense the thought which he has begun to express, and meanwhile he will heap, into a position seemingly alien and unnatural, one thing upon another parenthetically and from any external source whatsoever, throwing his hearer into alarm lest the whole structure of his words should fall to pieces, and compelling him in anxious sympathy to share the peril of the speaker; and then unexpectedly, after a long interval, he adds the long-awaited conclusion at the right place, namely the end, and produces a far greater effect by this very use, so bold and hazardous, of inversion. Examples may be spared because of their abundance.

XXIII

The figures of accumulation, variation, and climax are excellent weapons of public oratory, as you are aware, and contribute to elegance and to every form of sublimity and passion. Again, how greatly do changes of cases, tenses, persons, numbers, genders, diversify and enliven exposition. 2. Where the use of numbers is concerned, I would point out that style is not adorned only or chiefly by those words which are, as far as their forms go, in the singular, but in meaning are, when examined, found to be plural: as in the lines

A countless crowd forthright
Far-ranged along the beaches were clamouring 'Thunny in sight!'

The fact is more worthy of observation that in certain cases the use of the plural (for the singular) falls on the ear with still more imposing effect and impresses us by the very sense of multitude which the number conveys. 3. Such are the words of Oedipus in Sophocles.

> O nuptials, nuptials,
> Ye gendered me, and, having gendered, brought
> To light the selfsame seed, and so revealed
> Sires, brothers, sons, in one—all kindred blood!—
> Brides, mothers, wives, in one!—yea, whatso deeds
> Most shameful among humankind are done.

The whole enumeration can be summed up in a single proper name—on the one side Oedipus, on the other Jocasta. None the less, the expansion of the number into the plural helps to pluralise the misfortunes as well. There is a similar instance of multiplication in the line

> Forth Hectors and Sarpedons marching came,

and in that passage of Plato concerning the Athenians which we have quoted elsewhere. 4. 'For no Pelopes, nor Cadmi, nor Aegypti and Danai, nor the rest of the crowd of born foreigners dwell with us, but ours is the land of pure Greeks, free from foreign admixture,' etc. For naturally a theme seems more imposing to the ear when proper names are thus added, one upon the other, in troops. But this must be done only in cases in which the subject admits of amplification or redundancy or exaggeration or passion—one or more of these—

since we all know that a richly caparisoned style is extremely pretentious.

XXIV

Further (to take the converse case) particulars which are combined from the plural into the singular are sometimes most elevated in appearance. 'Thereafter,' says Demosthenes, 'all Peloponnesus was at variance.' 'And when Phrynichus had brought out a play entitled the *Capture of Miletus*, the whole theatre burst into tears.' [1] For the compression of the number from multiplicity into unity gives more fully the feeling of a single body. 2. In both cases the explanation of the elegance of expression is, I think, the same. Where the words are singular, to make them plural is the mark of unlooked-for passion; and where they are plural, the rounding of a number of things into a fine-sounding singular is surprising owing to the converse change.

XXV

If you introduce things which are past as present and now taking place, you will make your story no longer a narration but an actuality. Xenophon furnishes an illustration. 'A man,' says he, 'has fallen under Cyrus' horse, and being trampled strikes the horse with his sword in the belly. He rears and unseats Cyrus, who falls.' This construction is specially characteristic of Thucydides.

[1] Herod. vi. 21.

XXVI

In like manner the interchange of persons produces a vivid impression, and often makes the hearer feel that he is moving in the midst of perils:—

Thou hadst said that with toil unspent, and all unwasted of limb,
They closed in the grapple of war, so fiercely they rushed to the fray; [1]

and the line of Aratus:—

Never in that month launch thou forth amid lashing seas.

2. So also Herodotus: 'From the city of Elephantine thou shalt sail upwards, and then shalt come to a level plain; and after crossing this tract, thou shalt embark upon another vessel and sail for two days, and then shalt thou come to a great city whose name is Meroe.' Do you observe, my friend, how he leads you in imagination through the region and makes you *see* what you hear? All such cases of direct personal address place the hearer on the very scene of action. 3. So it is when you seem to be speaking, not to all and sundry, but to a single individual.

But Tydeides—thou wouldst not have known him, for whom that hero fought.[2]

You will make your hearer more excited and more attentive, and full of active participation, if you keep him on the alert by words addressed to himself.

XXVII

There is further the case in which a writer, when relating something about a person, suddenly breaks

[1] *Il.* xv. 697, 8. [2] *Il.* v. 85.

off and converts himself into that selfsame person. This species of figure is a kind of ourburst of passion.

Then with a far-ringing shout to the Trojans Hector cried,
Bidding them rush on the ships, bidding leave the spoils blood-dyed—
And whomso I mark from the galleys aloof on the farther side,
I will surely devise his death.[1]

The poet assigns the task of narration, as is fit, to himself, but the abrupt threat he suddenly, with no note of warning, attributes to the angered chief. It would have been frigid had he inserted the words, 'Hector said so and so.' As it is, the swift transition of the narrative has outstripped the swift transitions of the narrator. 2. Accordingly this figure should be used by preference when a sharp crisis does not suffer the writer to tarry, but constrains him to pass at once from one person to another. An example will be found in Hecataeus: 'Ceyx treated the matter gravely, and straightway bade the descendants of Heracles depart; for I am not able to succour you. In order, therefore, that ye may not perish yourselves and injure me, get you gone to some other country.' 3. Demosthenes in dealing with Aristogeiton has, somewhat differently, employed this variation of person to betoken the quick play of emotion. 'And will none of you,' he asks, 'be found to be stirred by loathing or even by anger at the violent deeds of this vile and shameless fellow, who—you whose licence of speech, most abandoned of men, is not confined by barriers nor by doors,

[1] *Il.* xv. 346.

which might perchance be opened!' With the sense thus incomplete, he suddenly breaks off and in his anger almost tears asunder a single expression into two persons,—'he who, O thou most abandoned!' Thus, although he has turned aside his address and seems to have left Aristogeiton, yet through passion he directs it upon him with far greater force. 4. Similarly with the words of Penelope:

Herald, with what behest art thou come from the suitor-band?
To give to the maids of Odysseus the godlike their command
To forsake their labours, and yonder for them the banquet to lay?
I would that of all their wooing this were the latest day,
That this were the end of your banquets, your uttermost revelling-hour,
Ye that assemble together and all our substance devour,
The wise Telemachus' store, as though ye never had heard,
In the days overpast of your childhood, your fathers' praising word,
How good Odysseus was.[1]

XXVIII

As to whether or no periphrasis contributes to the sublime, no one, I think, will hesitate. For just as in music the so-called accompaniments bring out the charm of the melody, so also periphrasis often harmonises with the normal expression and adds greatly to its beauty, especially if it has a quality which is not inflated and dissonant, but pleasantly tempered. 2. Plato will furnish an instance in proof at the opening of his Funeral Oration. 'In truth they have gained from us their rightful tribute, in the enjoyment of which they proceed

[1] *Odyss.* iv. 681–689.

along their destined path, escorted by their country publicly, and privately each by his kinsmen.' Death he calls 'their destined path,' and the tribute of accustomed rites he calls 'being escorted publicly by their fatherland.' Is it in a slight degree only that he has magnified the conception by the use of these words? Has he not rather, starting with unadorned diction, made it musical, and shed over it like a harmony the melodious rhythm which comes from periphrasis? 3. And Xenophon says, 'You regard toil as the guide to a joyous life. You have garnered in your souls the goodliest of all possessions and the fittest for warriors. For you rejoice in praise more than in all else.' In using, instead of 'you are willing to toil,' the words 'you deem toil the guide to a joyous life,' and in expanding the rest of the sentence in like manner, he has annexed to his eulogy a lofty idea. 4. And so with that inimitable phrase of Herodotus: 'The goddess afflicted with an unsexing malady those Scythians who had pillaged the temple.'

XXIX

A hazardous business, however, eminently hazardous is periphrasis, unless it be handled with discrimination; otherwise it speedily falls flat, with its odour of empty talk and its swelling amplitude. This is the reason why Plato (who is always strong in figurative language, and at times unseasonably so) is taunted because in his *Laws* he says that 'neither gold nor silver treasure should be allowed to establish itself and abide in the city.' The critic says that, if

he had been forbidding the possession of cattle, he would obviously have spoken of ovine and bovine treasure. 2. But our parenthetical disquisition with regard to the use of figures as bearing upon the sublime has run to sufficient length, my dear Terentianus; for all these things lend additional passion and animation to style, and passion is as intimately allied with sublimity as sketches of character with entertainment.

XXX

Since, however, it is the case that in discourse thought and diction are for the most part developed one through the other, come let us proceed to consider any branches of the subject of diction which have so far been neglected. Now it is, no doubt, superfluous to dilate to those who know it well upon the fact that the choice of proper and striking words wonderfully attracts and enthralls the hearer, and that such a choice is the leading ambition of all orators and writers, since it is the direct agency which ensures the presence in writings, as upon the fairest statues, of the perfection of grandeur, beauty, mellowness, dignity, force, power, and any other high qualities there may be, and breathes into dead things a kind of living voice. All this it is, I say, needless to mention, for beautiful words are in very truth the peculiar light of thought. 2. It may, however, be pointed out that stately language is not to be used everywhere, since to invest petty affairs with great and high-sounding names would seem just like put-

ting a full-sized tragic mask upon an infant boy. But in poetry and . . .

XXXI

. . . full of vigour and racy; and so is Anacreon's line, 'That Thracian mare no longer do I heed.' In this way, too, that original expression of Theopompus merits praise. Owing to the correspondence between word and thing it seems to me to be highly expressive; and yet Caecilius for some unexplained reason finds fault with it. 'Philip,' says Theopompus, 'had a genius for *stomaching* things.' Now a homely expression of this kind is sometimes much more telling than elegant language, for it is understood at once since it is drawn from common life, and the fact that it is familiar makes it only the more convincing. So the words 'stomaching things' are used most strikingly of a man who, for the sake of attaining his own ends, patiently and with cheerfulness endures things shameful and vile. 2. So with the words of Herodotus. 'Cleomenes,' he says, 'went mad, and with a small sword cut the flesh of his own body into strips, until he slew himself by making mincemeat of his entire person.' And, 'Pythes fought on shipboard, until he was utterly hacked to pieces.' These phrases graze the very edge of vulgarity, but they are saved from vulgarity by their expressiveness.

XXXII

Further, with regard to the number of metaphors to be employed, Caecilius seems to assent to the view

of those who lay it down that not more than two, or at the most three, should be ranged together in the same passage. Demosthenes is, in fact, the standard in this as in other matters. The proper time for using metaphors is when the passions roll like a torrent and sweep a multitude of them down their resistless flood. 2. 'Men,' says he, 'who are vile flatterers, who have maimed their own fatherlands each one of them, who have toasted away their liberty first to Philip and now to Alexander, who measure happiness by their belly and their lowest desires, and who have overthrown that liberty and that freedom from despotic mastery which to the Greeks of an earlier time were the rules and standards of good.' Here the orator's wrath against the traitors throws a veil over the number of the tropes. 3. In the same spirit, Aristotle and Theophrastus point out that the following phrases serve to soften bold metaphors—'as if,' and 'as it were,' and 'if one may so say,' and 'if one may venture such an expression'; for the qualifying words mitigate, they say, the audacity of expression. 4. I accept that view, but still for number and boldness of metaphors I maintain, as I said in dealing with figures, that strong and timely passion and noble sublimity are the appropriate palliatives. For it is the nature of the passions, in their vehement rush, to sweep and thrust everything before them, or rather to demand hazardous turns as altogether indispensable. They do not allow the hearer leisure to criticize the number of the metaphors because he is carried away by the fervour of the speaker.

5. Moreover, in the treatment of commonplaces and in descriptions there is nothing so impressive as a number of tropes following close one upon the other. It is by this means that in Xenophon the anatomy of the human tabernacle is magnificently depicted, and still more divinely in Plato. Plato says that its head is a citadel; in the midst, between the head and the breast, is built the neck like some isthmus. The vertebrae, he says, are fixed beneath like pivots. Pleasure is a bait which tempts men to ill, the tongue the test of taste; the heart is the knot of the veins and the wellspring of the blood that courses round impetuously, and it is stationed in the guard-house of the body. The passages by which the blood races this way and that he names alleys. He says that the gods, contriving succour for the beating of the heart (which takes place when dangers are expected, and when wrath excites it, since it then reaches a fiery heat), have implanted the lungs, which are soft and bloodless and have pores within, to serve as a buffer, in order that the heart may, when its inward wrath boils over, beat against a yielding substance and so escape injury. The seat of the desires he compared to the women's apartments in a house, that of anger to the men's. The spleen he called the napkin of the inward parts, whence it is filled with secretions and grows to a great and festering bulk. After this, the gods canopied the whole with flesh, putting forward the flesh as a defence against injuries from without, as though it were a hair-cushion. The blood he called

the fodder of the flesh. 'In order to promote nutrition,' he continues, 'they irrigated the body, cutting conduits as in gardens, in order that, with the body forming a set of tiny channels, the streams of the veins might flow as from a never-failing source.' When the end comes, he says that the cables of the soul are loosed like those of a ship, and she is allowed to go free. 6. Examples of a similar nature are to be found in a never-ending series. But those indicated are enough to show that figurative language possesses great natural power, and that metaphors contribute to the sublime; and at the same time that it is impassioned and descriptive passages which rejoice in them to the greatest extent. 7. It is obvious, however, even though I do not dwell upon it, that the use of tropes, like all other beauties of expression, is apt to lead to excess. On this score Plato himself is much criticized, since he is often carried away by a sort of frenzy of words into strong and harsh metaphors and into inflated allegory. 'For it is not readily observed,' he says, 'that a city ought to be mixed like a bowl, in which the mad wine seethes when it has been poured in, though when chastened by another god who is sober, falling thus into noble company, it makes a good and temperate drink.' For to call water 'a sober god,' and mixing 'chastening,' is, the critics say, the language of a poet, and one who is in truth far from sober. 8. Fastening upon such defects, however, Caecilius ventured, in his writings in praise of Lysias, to make the assertion that Lysias was altogether superior to Plato. In so

doing he gave way to two blind impulses of passion. Loving Lysias better even than himself, he nevertheless hates Plato more perfectly than he loves Lysias. In fact, he is carried away by the spirit of contention, and even his premisses are not, as he thought, admitted. For he prefers the orator as faultless and immaculate to Plato as one who has often made mistakes. But the truth is not of this nature, nor anything like it.

XXXIII

Come, now, let us take some writer who is really immaculate and beyond reproach. Is it not worth while, on this very point, to raise the general question whether we ought to give the preference, in poems and prose writings, to grandeur with some attendant faults, or to success which is moderate but altogether sound and free from error? Aye, and further, whether a greater number of excellences, or excellences higher in quality, would in literature rightly bear away the palm? For these are inquiries appropriate to a treatise on the sublime, and they imperatively demand a settlement. 2. For my part, I am well aware that lofty genius is far removed from flawlessness; for invariable accuracy incurs the risk of pettiness, and in the sublime, as in great fortunes, there must be something which is overlooked. It may be necessarily the case that low and average natures remain as a rule free from failing and in greater safety because they never run a risk or seek to scale the heights, while great endowments prove insecure because of

their very greatness. 3. In the second place, I am not ignorant that it naturally happens that the worse side of human character is always the more easily recognised, and that the memory of errors remains indelible, while that of excellences quickly dies away. 4. I have myself noted not a few errors on the part of Homer and other writers of the greatest distinction, and the slips they have made afford me anything but pleasure. Still I do not term them wilful errors, but rather oversights of a random and casual kind, due to neglect and introduced with all the heedlessness of genius. Consequently I do not waver in my view that excellences higher in quality, even if not sustained throughout, should always on a comparison be voted the first place, because of their sheer elevation of spirit if for no other reason. Granted that Apollonius in his *Argonautica* shows himself a poet who does not trip, and that in his pastorals Theocritus is, except in a few externals, most happy, would you not, for all that, choose to be Homer rather than Apollonius? 5. Again, does Eratosthenes in the *Erigone* (a little poem which is altogether free from flaw) show himself a greater poet than Archilochus with the rich and disorderly abundance which follows in his train and with that outburst of the divine spirit within him which it is difficult to bring under the rules of law? Once more, in lyric poetry would you prefer to be Bacchylides rather than Pindar? And in tragedy to be Ion of Chios rather than—Sophocles? It is true that Bacchylides and Ion are faultless and entirely elegant

writers of the polished school, while Pindar and Sophocles, although at times they burn everything before them as it were in their swift career, are often extinguished unaccountably and fail most lamentably. But would anyone in his senses regard all the compositions of Ion put together as an equivalent for the single play of the *Oedipus?*

XXXIV

If successful writing were to be estimated by number of merits and not by the true criterion, thus judged Hyperides would be altogether superior to Demosthenes. For he has a greater variety of accents than Demosthenes and a greater number of excellences, and like the pentathlete he falls just below the top in every branch. In all the contest he has to resign the first place to his rivals, while he maintains that place as against all ordinary persons. 2. Now Hyperides not only imitates all the strong points of Demosthenes with the exception of his composition, but he has embraced in a singular degree the excellences and graces of Lysias as well. For he talks with simplicity, where it is required, and does not adopt like Demosthenes one unvarying tone in all his utterances. He possesses the gift of characterisation in a sweet and pleasant form and with a touch of piquancy. There are innumerable signs of wit in him—the most polished raillery, high-bred ease, supple skill in the contests of irony, jests not tasteless or rude after the well-known Attic manner, but naturally suggested by the subject,

clever ridicule, much comic power, biting satire with well-directed fun, and what may be termed an inimitable charm investing the whole. He is excellently fitted by nature to excite pity; in narrating a fable he is facile, and with his pliant spirit he is also most easily turned towards a digression (as for instance in his rather poetical presentation of the story of Leto); while he has treated his Funeral Oration in the epideictic vein with probably unequalled success. 3. Demosthenes, on the other hand, is not an apt delineator of character, he is not facile, he is anything but pliant or epideictic, he is comparatively lacking in the entire list of excellences just given. Where he forces himself to be jocular and pleasant, he does not excite laughter, but rather becomes the subject of it, and when he wishes to approach the region of charm, he is all the farther removed from it. If he had attempted to write the short speech about Phryne or about Athenogenes, he would have all the more commended Hyperides to our regard. 4. The good points of the latter, however, many though they be, are wanting in elevation; they are the staid utterances of a sober-hearted man and leave the hearer unmoved, no one feeling terror when he reads Hyperides. But Demosthenes draws, as from a store, excellences allied to the highest sublimity and perfected to the utmost, the tone of lofty speech, living passions, copiousness, readiness, speed (where it is legitimate), and that power and vehemence of his which forbid approach. Having, I say, absorbed bodily within himself these mighty

gifts which we may deem heaven-sent (for it would not be right to term them human), he thus with the noble qualities which are his own routs all comers even where the qualities he does not possess are concerned, and overpowers with thunder and with lightning the orators of every age. One could sooner face with unflinching eyes a descending thunderbolt than meet with steady gaze his bursts of passion in their swift succession.

XXXV

But in the case of Plato and Lysias there is, as I said, a further point of difference. For not only in the degree of his excellences, but also in their number, Lysias is much inferior to Plato; and at the same time he surpasses him in his faults still more than he falls below him in his excellences. 2. What fact, then, was before the eyes of those superhuman writers who, aiming at everything that was highest in composition, contemned an all-pervading accuracy? This besides many other things, that Nature has appointed us men to be no base or ignoble animals; but when she ushers us into life and into the vast universe as into some great assembly, to be as it were spectators of the mighty whole and the keenest aspirants for honour, forthwith she implants in our souls the unconquerable love of whatever is elevated and more divine than we. 3. Wherefore not even the entire universe suffices for the thought and contemplation within the reach of the human mind, but our imaginations often pass beyond the bounds

of space, and if we survey our life on every side and see how much more it everywhere abounds in what is striking, and great, and beautiful, we shall soon discern the purpose of our birth. 4. This is why, by a sort of natural impulse, we admire not the small streams, useful and pellucid though they be, but the Nile, the Danube or the Rhine, and still more the Ocean. Nor do we view the tiny flame of our own kindling, guarded in lasting purity as its light ever is, with greater awe than the celestial fires though they are often shrouded in darkness; nor do we deem it a greater marvel than the craters of Etna, whose eruptions throw up stones from its depths and great masses of rock, and at times pour forth rivers of that pure and unmixed subterranean fire. 5. In all such matters we may say that what is useful or necessary men regard as commonplace, while they reserve their admiration for that which is astounding.

XXXVI

Now as regards the manifestations of the sublime in literature, in which grandeur is never, as it sometimes is in nature, found apart from utility and advantage, it is fitting to observe at once that, though writers of this magnitude are far removed from faultlessness, they none the less all rise above what is mortal; that all other qualities prove their possessors to be men, but sublimity raises them near the majesty of God; and that, while immunity from errors relieves from censure, it is grandeur that excites admiration. 2. What need to add thereto that each

of these supreme authors often redeems all his failures by a single sublime and happy touch, and most important of all, that if one were to pick out and mass together the blunders of Homer, Demosthenes, Plato, and all the rest of the greatest writers, they would be found to be a very small part, nay an infinitesimal fraction, of the triumphs which those heroes achieve on every hand? This is the reason why the judgment of all posterity, a verdict which envy itself cannot convict of perversity, has brought and offered those meeds of victory which up to this day it guards intact and seems likely still to preserve,

> Long as earth's waters shall flow, and her tall trees burgeon and bloom.

3. In reply, however, to the writer who maintains that the faulty Colossus is not superior to the Spearman of Polycleitus, it is obvious to remark among many other things that in art the utmost exactitude is admired, grandeur in the works of nature; and that it is by nature that man is a being gifted with speech. In statues likeness to man is the quality required; in discourse we demand, as I said, that which transcends the human. 4. Nevertheless—and the counsel about to be given reverts to the beginning of our memoir—since freedom from failings is for the most part the successful result of art, and excellence, though it may be unevenly sustained, the result of sublimity, the employment of art is in every way a fitting aid to nature; for it is the conjunction of the two which tends to ensure perfection.

Such are the decisions to which we have felt bound to come with regard to the questions proposed; but let every man cherish the view which pleases him best.

XXXVII

Closely related to Metaphors (for we must return to our point) are comparisons and similes, differing only in this respect. . . .

XXXVIII

. . . such Hyperboles as: 'unless you carry your brains trodden down in your heels.' It is necessary, therefore, to know where to fix the limit in each case; for an occasional overshooting of the mark ruins the hyperbole, and such expressions, when strained too much, lose their tension, and sometimes swing round and produce the contrary effect. 2. Isocrates, for example, fell into unaccountable puerility owing to the ambition which made him desire to describe everything with a touch of amplification. The theme of his *Panegyric* is that Athens surpasses Lacedaemon in benefits conferred upon Greece, and yet at the very outset of his speech he uses these words: 'Further, language has such capacity that it is possible thereby to debase things lofty and invest things small with grandeur, and to express old things in a new way, and to discourse in ancient fashion about what has newly happened.' 'Do you then, Isocrates,' it may be asked, 'mean in that way to interchange the facts of Lacedaemonian and Athenian history?'

For in his eulogy of language he has, we may say, published to his hearers a preamble warning them to distrust himself. 3. Perhaps, then, as we said in dealing with figures generally, those hyperboles are best in which the very fact that they are hyperboles escapes attention. This happens when, through stress of strong emotion, they are uttered in connexion with some great crisis, as is done by Thucydides in the case of those who perished in Sicily. 'The Syracusans,' he says, 'came down to the water's edge and began the slaughter of those chiefly who were in the river, and the water at once became polluted, but none the less it was swallowed although muddy and mixed with blood, and to most it was still worth fighting for.' That a draught of blood and mud should still be worth fighting for, is rendered credible by the intensity of the emotion at a great crisis. 4. So with the passage in which Herodotus tells of those who fell at Thermopylae. 'On this spot,' he says, 'the barbarians buried them as they defended themselves with daggers—those of them who had daggers still left—and with hands and mouths.' Here you may be inclined to protest against the expressions 'fight with their very mouths' against men in armour, and 'being buried' with darts. At the same time the narrative carries conviction; for the event does not seem to be introduced for the sake of the hyperbole, but the hyperbole to spring naturally from the event. 5. For as I never cease to say, the deeds and passions which verge on transport are a sufficient lenitive and remedy for every audacity of speech. This is the reason why

the quips of comedy, although they may be carried to the extreme of absurdity, are plausible because they are so amusing. For instance,

> Smaller his field was than a Spartan letter.

For mirth, too, is an emotion, an emotion which has its root in pleasure. 6. Hyperboles are employed in describing things small as well as great, since exaggeration is the common element in both cases. And, in a sense, ridicule is an amplification of the paltriness of things.

XXXIX

The fifth of those elements contributing to the sublime which we mentioned, my excellent friend, at the beginning, still remains to be dealt with, namely the arrangement of the words in a certain order. In regard to this, having already in two treatises sufficiently stated such results as our inquiry could compass, we will add for the purpose of our present undertaking only what is absolutely essential, namely the fact that harmonious arrangement is not only a natural source of persuasion and pleasure among men, but also a wonderful instrument of lofty utterance and of passion. 2. For does not the flute instil certain emotions into its hearers and as it were make them beside themselves and full of frenzy, and supplying a rhythmical movement constrain the listener to move rhythmically in accordance therewith and to conform himself to the melody, although he may be utterly ignorant of music? Yes,

and the tones of the harp, although in themselves they signify nothing at all, often cast a wonderful spell, as you know, over an audience by means of the variations of sounds, by their pulsation against one another, and by their mingling in concert. 3. And yet these are mere semblances and spurious copies of persuasion, not (as I have said) genuine activities of human nature. Are we not, then, to hold that composition, being a harmony of that language which is implanted by nature in man and which appeals not to the hearing only but to the soul itself, since it calls forth manifold shapes of words, thoughts, deeds, beauty, melody, all of them born at our birth and growing with our growth, and since by means of the blending and variation of its own tones it seeks to introduce into the minds of those who are present the emotion which affects the speaker, and since it always brings the audience to share in it and by the building of phrase upon phrase raises a sublime and harmonious structure—are we not, I say, to hold that harmony by these selfsame means allures us and invariably disposes us to stateliness and dignity and elevation and every emotion which it contains within itself, gaining absolute mastery over our minds? But it is folly to dispute concerning matters which are generally admitted, since experience is proof sufficient. . . .

XL

Among the chief causes of the sublime in speech, as in the structure of the human body, is the colloca-

tion of members, a single one of which if severed from another possesses in itself nothing remarkable, but all united together make a full and perfect organism. So the constituents of grandeur, when separated from one another, carry with them sublimity in distraction this way and that, but when formed into a body by association and when further encircled in a chain of harmony they become sonorous by their very rotundity; and in periods sublimity is, as it were, a contribution made by a multitude. 2. We have, however, sufficiently shown that many writers and poets who possess no natural sublimity and are perhaps even wanting in elevation have nevertheless, although employing for the most part common and popular words with no striking associations of their own, by merely joining and fitting these together, secured dignity and distinction and the appearance of freedom from meanness. Instances will be furnished by Philistus among many others, by Aristophanes in certain passages, by Euripides in most. 3. In the last-mentioned author, Heracles, after the scene in which he slays his children, uses the words:—

Full-fraught am I with woes—no space for more.

The expression is a most ordinary one, but it has gained elevation through the aptness of the structure of the line. If you shape the sentence in a different way, you will see this plainly, the fact being that Euripides is a poet in virtue of his power of composition rather than of his invention. 4. In

the passage which describes Dirce torn away by the bull,

> Whitherso'er he turned
> Swift wheeling round, he haled and hurled withal
> Dame, rock, oak, intershifted ceaselessly,

the conception itself is a fine one, but it has been rendered more forcible by the fact that the harmony is not hurried or carried as it were on rollers, but the words act as buttresses for one another and find support in the pauses, and issue finally in a well-grounded sublimity.

XLI

There is nothing in the sphere of the sublime that is so lowering as broken and agitated movement of language, such as is characteristic of pyrrhics and trochees and dichorees, which fall altogether to the level of dance-music. For all over-rhythmical writing is at once felt to be affected and finical and wholly lacking in passion owing to the monotony of its superficial polish. 2. And the worst of it all is that, just as petty lays draw their hearer away from the point and compel his attention to themselves, so also over-rhythmical style does not communicate the feeling of the words but simply the feeling of the rhythm. Sometimes, indeed, the listeners, knowing beforehand the due terminations, stamp their feet in time with the speaker, and as in a dance give the right step in anticipation. 3. In like manner those words are destitute of sublimity which lie too close together, and are cut up into short and tiny syllables,

and are held together as if with wooden bolts by sheer inequality and ruggedness.

XLII

Further, excessive concision of expression tends to lower the sublime, since grandeur is marred when the thought is brought into too narrow a compass. Let this be understood not of proper compression, but of what is absolutely petty and cut into segments. For concision curtails the sense, but brevity goes straight to the mark. It is plain that, *vice versa*, prolixities are frigid, for so is everything that resorts to unseasonable length.

XLIII

Triviality of expression is also apt to disfigure sublimity. In Herodotus, for example, the tempest is described with marvellous effect in all its details, but the passage surely contains some words below the dignity of the subject. The following may serve as an instance—'when the sea seethed.' The word 'seethed' detracts greatly from the sublimity because it is an ill-sounding one. Further, 'the wind,' he says, 'grew fagged,' and those who clung to the spars met 'an unpleasant end.' The expression 'grew fagged' is lacking in dignity, being vulgar; and the word 'unpleasant' is inappropriate to so great a disaster. 2. Similarly, when Theopompus had dressed out in marvellous fashion the descent of the Persian king upon Egypt, he spoilt the whole by some petty words. 'For which of the cities (he says) or which

of the tribes in Asia did not send envoys to the Great King? Which of the products of the earth or of the achievements of art was not, in all its beauty or preciousness, brought as an offering to his presence? Consider the multitude of costly coverlets and mantles, in purple or white or embroidery; the multitude of pavilions of gold furnished with all things useful; the multitude, too, of tapestries and costly couches. Further, gold and silver plate richly wrought, and goblets and mixing-bowls, some of which you might have seen set with precious stones, and others finished with care and at great price. In addition to all this, countless myriads of Greek and barbaric weapons, and beasts of burden beyond all reckoning and victims fattened for slaughter, and many bushels of condiments, and many bags and sacks and sheets of papyrus and all other useful things, and an equal number of pieces of salted flesh from all manner of victims, so that the piles of them were so great that those who were approaching from a distance took them to be hills and eminences confronting them.' 3. He runs off from the more elevated to the more lowly, whereas he should, on the contrary, have risen higher and higher. With his wonderful description of the whole outfit he mixes bags and condiments and sacks, and conveys the impression of a confectioner's shop! For just as if, in the case of those very adornments, between the golden vessels and the jewelled mixing-bowls and the silver plate and the pavilions of pure gold and the goblets, a man were to bring and set in the midst

paltry bags and sacks, the proceeding would have been offensive to the eye, so do such words when introduced out of season constitute deformities and as it were blots on the diction. 4. He might have described the scene in broad outline just as he says that hills blocked their way, and with regard to the preparations generally have spoken of 'waggons and camels and the multitude of beasts of burden carrying everything that ministers to the luxury and enjoyment of the table,' or have used some such expression as 'piles of all manner of grain and things which conduce preeminently to good cookery and comfort of body,' or if he must necessarily put it in so uncompromising a way, he might have said that 'all the dainties of cooks and caterers were there.' 5. In lofty passages we ought not to descend to sordid and contemptible language unless constrained by some overpowering necessity, but it is fitting that we should use words worthy of the subject and imitate nature the artificer of man, for she has not placed in full view our grosser parts or the means of purging our frame, but has hidden them away as far as was possible, and as Xenophon says has put their channels in the remotest background, so as not to sully the beauty of the entire creature. 6. But enough; there is no need to enumerate, one by one, the things which produce triviality. For since we have previously indicated those qualities which render style noble and lofty, it is evident that their opposites will for the most part make it low and base.

XLIV

It remains however (as I will not hesitate to add, in recognition of your love of knowledge) to clear up, my dear Terentianus, a question which a certain philosopher has recently mooted. 'I wonder,' he says, 'as no doubt do many others, how it happens that in our time there are men who have the gift of persuasion to the utmost extent, and are well fitted for public life, and are keen and ready, and particularly rich in all the charms of language, yet there no longer arise really lofty and transcendent natures unless quite exceptionally. So great and world-wide a dearth of high utterance attends our age.' 2. 'Can it be,' he continued, 'that we are to accept the trite explanation that democracy is the kind nursing-mother of genius, and that literary power may be said to share its rise and fall with democracy and democracy alone? For freedom, it is said, has power to feed the imaginations of the lofty-minded and to inspire hope, and where it prevails there spreads abroad the eagerness of mutual rivalry and the emulous pursuit of the foremost place. 3. Moreover, owing to the prizes which are open to all under popular government, the mental excellences of the orator are continually exercised and sharpened, and as it were rubbed bright, and shine forth, as it is natural they should, with all the freedom which inspires the doings of the state. To-day,' he went on, 'we seem in our boyhood to learn the lessons of a righteous servitude, being all but enswathed in

its customs and observances, when our thoughts are yet young and tender, and never tasting the fairest and most productive source of eloquence (by which,' he added, 'I mean freedom), so that we emerge in no other guise than that of sublime flatterers.' 4. This is the reason, he maintained, why no slave ever becomes an orator, although all other faculties may belong to menials. In the slave there immediately burst out signs of fettered liberty of speech, of the dungeon as it were, of a man habituated to buffetings. 5. 'For the day of slavery,' as Homer has it, 'takes away half our manhood.' 'Just as,' he proceeded, 'the cages (if what I hear is true) in which are kept the Pygmies, commonly called *nani*, not only hinder the growth of the creatures confined within them, but actually attenuate them through the bonds which beset their bodies, so one has aptly termed all servitude (though it be most righteous) the cage of the soul and a public prison-house.' 6. I answered him thus: 'It is easy, my good sir, and characteristic of human nature, to find fault with the age in which one lives. But consider whether it may not be true that it is not the world's peace that ruins great natures, but far rather this war illimitable which holds our desires in its grasp, aye, and further still those passions which occupy as with troops our present age and utterly harry and plunder it. For the love of money (a disease from which we all now suffer sorely) and the love of pleasure make us their thralls, or rather, as one may say, drown us body and soul in the depths, the love of riches being a malady

which makes men petty, and the love of pleasure one which makes them most ignoble. 7. On reflexion I cannot discover how it is possible for us, if we value boundless wealth so highly, or, to speak more truly, deify it, to avoid allowing the entrance into our souls of the evils which are inseparable from it. For vast and unchecked wealth is accompanied, in close conjunction and step for step as they say, by extravagance, and as soon as the former opens the gates of cities and houses, the latter immediately enters and abides. And when time has passed, the pair build nests in the lives of men, as the wise say, and quickly give themselves to the rearing of offspring, and breed ostentation, and vanity, and luxury, no spurious progeny of theirs, but only too legitimate. If these children of wealth are permitted to come to maturity, straightway they beget in the soul inexorable masters: insolence, and lawlessness, and shamelessness. 8. This must necessarily happen, and men will no longer lift up their eyes or have any further regard for fame, but the ruin of such lives will gradually reach its complete consummation, and sublimities of soul fade and wither away and become contemptible, when men are lost in admiration of their own mortal parts and omit to exalt that which is immortal. 9. For a man who has once accepted a bribe for a judicial decision cannot be an unbiassed and upright judge of what is just and honourable (since to the man who is venal his own interests must seem honourable and just); and the same is true where the entire life of each of us is ordered by bribes, and huntings after

the death of others, and the laying of ambushes for legacies, while gain from any and every source we purchase, each one of us, at the price of life itself, being the slaves of pleasure. In an age which is ravaged by plagues so sore, is it possible for us to imagine that there is still left an unbiassed and incorruptible judge of works that are great and likely to reach posterity, or is it not rather the case that all are influenced in their decisions by the passion for gain? 10. Nay, it is perhaps better for men like ourselves to be ruled than to be free, since our appetites, if let loose without restraint upon our neighbours like beasts from a cage, would set the world on fire with deeds of evil. 11. Summing up, I maintained that among the banes of the natures which our age produces must be reckoned that half-heartedness in which the life of all of us with few exceptions is passed; for we do not labour or exert ourselves except for the sake of praise and pleasure, never for those solid benefits which are a worthy object of our own efforts and the respect of others. 12. But ''tis best to leave these riddles unresolved,' [1] and to proceed to what next presents itself, namely the subject of the passions, about which I previously undertook to write in a separate treatise. These form, as it seems to me, a material part of discourse generally and of the sublime itself.

[1] Eurip. *Electra* 379.

NOTES

NOTES

ARISTOTLE'S POETICS

The best recent editions for English readers are: Ingram Bywater's "Aristotle on the Art of Poetry, a revised text with critical introduction, translation [reprinted here], and commentary," Oxford, 1909; and S. H. Butcher's "Aristotle's Theory of Poetry and Fine Art," text, translation, notes, essays, London, 1895; fourth edition, 1911.

The chapter (VI) in C. S. Baldwin's "Ancient Rhetoric and Poetic" interpreting Aristotle's work contains (pages 135–139) a tabular analysis of its whole course.

Page 3. **modes of imitation.** Without excluding the ordinary sense of *imitation*, Aristotle uses the word more broadly to mean the following of the ways of human nature, the representation or the suggestion of men's characters, emotions, and actions. Poetic is thus for him an art of creative composition, of "imitating men in action."

Page 11. **pity and fear . . . to accomplish catharsis.** Emotion, that is, is not merely aroused; it is satisfied; it is carried through to a release. Bywater, pages 152–161, has discussed this oft-quoted phrase amply, and in an appendix (361–365) has compiled with their dates the successive critical translations.

Page 14. **peripeties.** The *peripety* is the turning-point, or main crisis, of the play; as, in *Macbeth*, the vision of Banquo's ghost at the banquet; in *Othello*, the first doubt concerning Desdemona; in *The Merchant of Venice*, Portia's "Tarry a little. There is something else."

Page 15. The point of Chapter VII is that plot is a planned sequence of actions. Instead of merely reproducing the cross-currents of actual living, drama "imitates" life by creative interpretation.

Page 20. **propter hoc** or **post hoc.** These terms of logic are used to indicate the fallacy of assuming that what follows in time necessarily follows as result.

Page 28. **stage artifice.** The point is that the dramatic solution should "arise out of the plot itself," result inevitably from the course of the action, not be foisted on the play by interference from outside. Admirers of the *Medea* will maintain that its solution, though including supernatural intervention, none the less does "arise out of the plot itself," since an essential motive of that plot is Medea's supernatural power.

LONGINUS ON THE SUBLIME

The translation reprinted here is from the edition of W. Rhys Roberts (Cambridge, 1899; second edition, 1907), which gives, besides a critical text, by far the most thorough, substantial, and suggestive discussion. Other modern English translations are listed, and the work is analyzed, in C. S. Baldwin's *Ancient Rhetoric and Poetic*, pages 122–125. Professor Roberts's reasons for assigning the essay to the first century will be found in *Philological Quarterly*, 7:209 (July, 1928).

Page 58. **invention . . . order,** the first two headings in the traditional scheme of ancient rhetoric, usually known by their Latin names **inventio** and **dispositio.** The former means not *invention* in the usual sense, but the exploration of the subject to find (**invenire**) what is most significant for the particular purpose and audience. The latter, called here by its usual Greek name, is further defined by this author through the use of the Greek word (translated *arrangement*) from which we derive our English word *economy*.

Page 71. **the legislator of the Jews.** This striking reference to Moses by a Greek author has challenged the attention of many critics. It is one of the indications leading the best of them, Professor Rhys Roberts, to think that the author was probably under the Christian influences of the first century.

Page 79. **the orator,** i.e., Demosthenes; and so **our orator** below.

Page 111. **Oedipus.** It is worth noticing that critics as far removed from each other as Aristotle and this author agree upon the eminence of this play.

Page 112. **epideictic,** the Greek term for the oratory of occasion, e.g., commemorative speeches.

Page 118. **harmonious arrangement.** The ancient treatises on style agree in regarding sentence rhythm as fundamental.

Page 120. **periods,** in the sense of sentences rhythmically rounded.

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